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Ritual, landscape and territory : Phoenician and Punic non-funerary religious sites in the Mediterranean; an analysis of the archaeological evidence.

Ritual, Landscape, and Territory.
Phoenician and Punic Non-Funerary Religious Sites in the Mediterranean:
An Analysis of the Archaeological Evidence.

Volume I
Text

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Phoenician and Punic religious sites have often been used in discussions of sacred beliefs and practices. Excavation results are taken as given and the criteria used to define and defend the religious nature of these sites have never been questioned. This thesis tackles this issue in an attempt to understand the nature of Phoenician and Punic non-funerary religious space. The resultant picture is a variegated one where the architectural morphology of the monuments is diverse, defying attempts at a neat, clear-cut and comfortable classification. It is argued that this variability is linked to the phenomenon of Phoenician colonization: despite the fact that a common attitude informed a process whereby appropriation of land and territory was carried out through religious ritual, unforeseen experiences in new spatial contexts elicited different responses from Phoenician and Punic society.

For my parents

and

alla cara memoria del
Professore Giovanni Tore

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other degree. The views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

Signed: ..... Date: March 1999

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAAS	*Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes*
ABD	*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, editor-in-chief David Noel FREEDMAN. Vols 1-6. Doubleday, New York. 1992.
ACEPP	*Actes du III^e Congrès International des Études Phéniciennes et Puniques, Tunis 11-16 novembre 1991*, edited by M'hamed Hassine FANTAR and Mansour GHAKI. 2 vols. Insitut National du Patrimoine, Tunis. 1995.
ACFP I	*Atti del I Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici, Roma 5-10 novembre 1979*. 3 vols. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1983.
ACFP II	*Atti del II Congresso Internazionale di Studi Fenici e Punici, Roma 9-14 Novembre 1987*. 3 vols. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1991.
AION	*Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli*
AJA	*American Journal of Archaeology*
AJBA	*Australian Journal of Biblical Archaeology*
ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by James B. PRITCHARD. 2nd ed. with Supplement. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 1969.

ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, edited by James B. PRITCHARD. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 1950.
Antas 1969	*Ricerche Puniche ad Antas. Rapporto preliminare della Missione archeologica dell'Università di Rome e della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Cagliari*, by E. ACQUARO, F.BARRECA, S. M. CECCHINI, et al. Studi Semitici 30. Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma. 1969.
Archéologie au Levant	*Archéologie au Levant. Recueil à la mémoire de Roger Saidah.* Collection de la Maison de l'Orient Méditerranéen N° 12, Série Archéologique 9. Maison de l'Orient, Paris. 1982.
ASHL	*The Archaeology of Society in the Holy Land*, edited by Thomas E. LEVY. Leicester University Press, London. 1995.
BAC	*Bulletin Archéologique et Historique du Comité des Travaux Historiques et Scientifiques*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research*
BAR	*British Archaeological Reports*
BARev	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BCH	*Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique*
BIFAO	*Bulletin de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale*
BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Ryland Library*

BMQ	*British Museum Quarterly*
BSA	*Annual of the British School at Athens*
CAH	*Cambridge Ancient History*
CAJ	*Cambridge Archaeological Journal*
CANE	*Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, editor-in-chief Jack M. SASSON. 4 vols. Charles Scriber's Sons, New York. 1995.
CIS I	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars I. Inscriptiones Phoenicias continens*. Paris. 1881-
CPP	*La Civilisation Phénicienne et Punique. Manuel de recherche*, edited by Véronique KRINGS. E. J. Brill, Leiden. 1995.
CRAI	*Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
DAE	*British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt*, by Ian SHAW and Paul NICHOLSON. British Museum Press, London. 1995
Dizionario	*Dizionario della Civiltà Fenicia*, edited by Maria Giulia AMADASI GUZZO, Corinne BONNET, Maria Serena CECCHINI, and Paolo XELLA. Dizioniari Gremese. Gremese Editore, Roma. 1992.
DCPP	*Dictionnaire de la Civilization Phénicienne et Punique*, edited by Édouard LIPINSKI. Brepols, Turnhout. 1992.

EI	*Eretz-Israel*
EVO	*Egitto e Vicino Oriente*
GGM	*Geographi Græci Minores*, by Carl Müller. 2 vols. Ambrosio Firmin Didot, Paris. 1885.
Greek Colonists	*Greek Colonists and Native Populations*, edited by Jean-Paul DESCOEUDRES. Proceedings of the First Australian Congress of Classical Archaeology held in honour of Emeritus Professor A. D. Trendall. Sydney 9-14 July 1985. Humanities Research Centre, Canberra and Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1990.
Grotta Regina I	*Grotta Regina - I. Rapporto preliminare della Missione congiunta con la Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia Occidentale*, by Anna Maria BISI, Maria Giulia GUZZO AMADASI and Vincenzo TUSA. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1969.
Grotta Regina II	*Grotta Regina - II. Le Iscrizioni Puniche. Rapporto preliminare della Missione congiunta con la Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia Occidentale*, by Gianna COACCI POLSELLI, Maria Giulia GUZZO AMADASI and Vincenzo TUSA. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1979.
I Fenici 1988	*I Fenici*. (Exhibition Catalogue) Scientific direction by Sabatino MOSCATI. Bompiani, Milano. 1988.

I Fenici 1995	*I Fenici: Ieri Oggi Domani. Ricerche, scoperte, progetti (Roma 3-5 marzo 1994)*. Istituto per la Civiltà Fenicia e Punica, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Rome. 1995
ICO	*Le Iscrizioni Fencie e Puniche in Occidente*, by Maria Giulia GUZZO AMADASI. Studi Semitici 28. Istituto di Studio del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma. 1967.
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
IGLS	*Inscriptiones Graecae et Latines de la Syrie.* Paris. 1929-
IJNA	*International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*
Insediamenti Fenici e Punici	*Insediamenti Fenici e Punici nel Mediterraneo Occidentale. Le pays de Carthage - Italia - España*, by E. ACQUARO, M. E. AUBET and M. H. FANTAR Itinerari XIII. Libreria dello Stato, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma. 1993
IstMitt	*Istanbuler Mitteilungen*
JEA	*Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JMA	*Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology*
JMS	*Journal of Mediterranean Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

KAI	*Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, by H. DONNER and W. RÖLLIG. 3 vols. Revised edition. Wiesbaden. 1966-1969.
Kition V,i	*Excavations at Kition. V. The Pre-Phoenician Levels. Areas I and II. Part I (text)*, by V. Karageorghis and M. Demas. Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. 1985.
Kition V,ii	*Excavations at Kition. V. The Pre-Phoenician Levels. Areas I II. Part II (text)*, by V. Karageorghis. Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. 1985.
Kition V,iii	*Excavations at Kition. V. The Pre-Phoenician Levels. Plates. Areas I and II*, by V. Karageorghis and M. Demas. Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. 1985.
Kition V,iv	*Excavations at Kition. V. The Pre-Phoenician Levels. Plans and Sections. Areas I and II*, by V. Karageorghis and M. Demas. Department of Antiquities, Cyprus. 1985.
LIMC	*Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae*. Artemis Verlag, Zürich and München. 8 vols. (text), 8 vols. (plates). 1981-1997.
MARev	*Malta Archaeological Review*
Miscellanea Eugenio Manni	φιλιας χαριν - *Miscellanea di Studi Classici in onore di Eugenio Manni*, 6 vols. Giorgio Bretschneider, Roma. 1980.
MM	*Madrider Mitteilungen*

MM 1963 — *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1963*, by Vincenzo BONELLO, Vincent BORG, Michelangelo CAGIANO DE AZEVEDO *et al.* Università di Roma, Roma. 1964.

MM 1964 — *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1964*, by Michelangelo CAGIANO DE AZEVEDO, Caterina CAPRINO, Antonia CIASCA *et al.* Università di Roma, Roma. 1965.

MM 1965 — *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1965*, by Michelangelo CAGIANO DE AZEVEDO, Caterina CAPRINO, Antonia CIASCA *et al.* Università di Roma, Roma. 1966.

MM 1966 — *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1966*, by Michelangelo CAGIANO DE AZEVEDO, Caterina CAPRINO, Antonia CIASCA *et al.* Università di Roma, Roma. 1967.

MM 1967 — *Missione archeologica italiana a Malta. Rapporto preliminare della Campagna 1967*, by Clara BOZZI, Caterina CAPRINO, Antonia CIASCA *et al.* Università di Roma, Roma. 1968.

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Momenti precoloniali — *Momenti Precoloniali nel Mediterraneo Antico. Questioni di metodo, Aree d'indagine, Evidenze a confronto*, edited by Enrico ACQUARO, Louis GODART, Federico MAZZA, and Domenico MUSTI. Collezione di Studi Fenici, 28. Atti del Convegno Internazionle (Roma, 14-16 marzo 1985). Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1988

Motya 1955 — Motya: 1955. Report of the 1955 Trial Excavations at Motya near Marsala (Sicily) undertaken by the Oxford University Archaeological Expedition to Motya, by B. S. J. ISSERLIN, W. CULICAN, W. L. BROWN, and A. TUSA-CUTRONI *PBSR* 26 (1958): 1-29.

Motya 1964 — Motya, a Phoenician-Punic site near Marsala, Sicily. Preliminary report of the Leeds - London - Fairleigh Dickinson Expedition, 1961-1963, by B. S. J. ISSERLIN, E. MACNAMARA, J. N. COLDSTREAM *et al*. *The Annual of Leeds University Oriental Society* 4 (1964): 84-131.

Motya 1974	*Motya. A Phoenician and Carthaginian City in Sicily*, edited by B. S. J. ISSERLIN and Joan DU PLAT TAYLOR. A report of the excavations undertaken during the years 1961-65 on behalf of the University of Leeds, The Institute of Archaeology of London University and Fairleigh Dickinson University, New Jersey. E. J. Brill, Leiden. 1974.
Mozia 1989	*Mozia*, by Antonia CIASCA, Aldina CUTRONI TUSA, Maria Luisa FAMÀ *et al*. Itinerari - IV. Libreria dello Stato, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma. 1989.
Mozia I	*Mozia I. Rapport preliminare della campagna di scavi 1964*. Studi Semitici 12. Università degli Studi di Roma, Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia Occidentale, Roma. 1965.
Mozia II	*Mozia II. Rapporto preliminare della campagna di scavi 1965*. Studi Semitici 19. Università degli Studi di Roma, Soprintendenza alle Antichità della Sicilia Occidentale, Roma. 1966.
Mozia III	*Mozia III. Rapporto Preliminare della campagna di scavi 1966*, by Isabella BRANCOLI, Antonia CIASCA, Giovanni GARBINI *et al*.Studi Semitici 24. Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, Roma.1967.
Mozia IV	*Mozia IV. Rapporto preliminare della campagna di scavi 1967*, by Antonia CIASCA, Giovanni GARBINI, Paolino MINGAZZINI, *et al*. Studi Semitici 29. Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, Roma. 1968.

Mozia VI	*Mozia VI. Rapporto preliminare della campagna di scavi* 1969, by Antonia CIASCA, Maria Giulia GUZZO AMADASI, Sabatino MOSCATI, Vincenzo TUSA. Studi Semitici 37. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1970.
Mozia VII	*Mozia VII. Rapporto preliminare della campagna di scavi 1970*, by Fernando BEVILACQUA, Antonia CIASA, Gabriella MATTHIAE SCANDONE, *et al.* Studi Semitici 40. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1972.
Mozia VIII	*Mozia VIII. Rapporto preliminare della campagna di scavi 1971*, by Antonia CIASCA, Vincenzo TUSA, and Maria Luisa UBERTI. Studi Semitici 45. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1973.
Mozia IX	*Mozia IX. Rapporto preliminare della campagna di scavi 1972-1974*, by Antonia CIASCA, Gianna COACCI POLSELLI, Ninina CUOMO DI CAPRIO *et al.* Studi Semitici 50. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma. 1978.
MS I	*Monte Sirai I. Rapporto Preliminare della Missione archeologica dell'Università di Roma e della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Cagliari*, by Ferrucio BARRECA and Giovanni GARBINI.Studi Semitici 11. Centro di Studi Semitici, Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente - Università di Roma, Roma. 1964.
MS II	*Monte Sirai II. Rapporto preliminare della Missione archeologica dell'Università di Roma e della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Cagliari*, by Maria Giulia AMADASI, Ferruccio BARRECA, Piero BARTOLONI, I. BRANCOLI *et al.* Studi Semitici 14. Università di Roma,

	Centro di Studi Semitici, Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Roma. 1965.
MS III	*Monte Sirai III. Rapporto preliminare della Missione archeologica dell'Università di Roma e della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Cagliari*, by Maria Giulia AMADASI, Ferruccio BARRECA, Giovanni GARBINI *et al.* Studi Semitici 20. Università di Roma, Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Roma. 1966.
MS IV	*Monte Sirai IV. Rapporto Preliminare della Missione Archeologica dell' Università di Roma e della Soprintendenza alle Antichità di Cagliari*, by Maria Giulia AMADASI, Ferruccio BARRECA, Piero BAROLONI *et al.* Studi Semitici 25. Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente, Università di Roma, Roma. 1967.
MS 1992	*Monte Sirai*, by Piero BARTOLONI, Sandro Filippo BONDÌ, and Luisa Anna MARRAS. Itinerari IX. Ministero Per I Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Comitato Nazionale Per Gli Studi e Le Ricerche Sulla Civiltà Fenicia e Punica, Roma. 1992.
MUSJ	*Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph de Beyrouth*
NBAS	*Nuovo Bullettino Archeologico Sardo*
NEAEHL	*The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land*, edited by Ephraim STERN. 4 vols. The Israel Exploration Soceity & Carta, Jerusalem. 1993.
NLM	National Library of Malta

NotSc	*Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità*
OA	*Oriens Antiquus*
OEANE	*The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East*, editor-in-chief Eric M. MEYERS. 5 vols. Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford. 1997.
OCD	*The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, edited by Simon HORNBLOWER and Anthony SPAWFORTH. 3rd edn. Oxford University Press, Oxford. 1996.
OJA	*Oxford Journal of Archaeology*
OpAth	*Opuscula Atheniensia*
PBSR	*Papers of the British School at Rome*
PCPhS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
PdP	*Parola del Passato*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
Phönizier im Westen	*Phönizier im Westen*, edited by Hans Georg NIEMEYER. Madrider Beiträge, 8. Proceedings of an International Symposium entitled "Die phöniziche Expansion im westlichen Mittelmeerraum" held in Köln, 24-27 April 1979. Verlag Philipp Von Zabern, Mainz am Rhein. 1982.

Portolano 1740	*Portolano di tutte le parti e luoghi da Nave e Galere per tutto il Mare Mediterraneo, Isole, Porti con le traversue e luoghi pericolosi incomminciando dal'Capo di San Vincenzo, sin al Capo Bucadoro. Composto da Zaccaria Rispolo Maltese Pilota Reale della Squadra delle Galere del Regno, et Isola di Sicilia. 1740.* (NLM 757)
Portolano nd	*Varie Osservazioni di Porti, Spiaggie, Fondi, Scogli, Capi, Basso e Pieno Mare di Diverse Porti Per uso di Gioviani Principianti nell'Aree Nautica, impegnati al Servizio della Squadra dell'inclita Religione Gerosolimitana Fatte da Michel Angelo Farrugia, Maltese, Primo pilota dell'istessa. Dedicate All'Altezza Emminentissima di Fra Don Emanuele Pinto, Gran Maestro del Detto Ordine e Principe Sovrano dell'Isole di Malta, e Gozzo.* (NLM 282)
PPS	*Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*
Pyrgi 1970	Pyrgi. Scavi del Santuario Etrusco (1959-1967). *NotSc* 24 (1970) (Supplemento II): 1-775.
QDAP	*Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine*
QSACO	*Quaderni della Soprintendenza Archeologica per le Provincie di Cagliari e Oristano*
RB	*Revue Biblique*
RDAC	*Report of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus*

Religio Phoenicia	*Studia Phoenicia IV. Religio Phoenicia. Acta Coloquii Namurcensis habiti diebus 14 et 15 mensis Decembris anni 1984*, edited by C. BONNET, E. LIPINSKI, P. MARCHETTI. Société des Études Classiques, Namur. 1986.
Religione Fenicia	*La Religione Fenicia. Matrici orientali e sviluppi occidentali. Atti del Colloquio in Roma, 6 marzo 1979.* Studi Semitici 53. Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma.
RÉS	*Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique*. Paris. 1905-
RM	*Mitteilungen des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*
RPARA	*Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*
RSF	*Rivista di Studi Fenici*
Sardi 1984	*I Sardi: La Sardegna dal Paleolitico all'Età Romana. Guida per schede dei siti archeologici sardi*, edited by Emmanuel Anati. Prima ristampa 1985. Jaca Book, Cagliari. 1984.
ScAnt	*Scienze dell'Antichità*
SCE 1937	*The Swedish Cyprus Expedition. Finds and results of the excavations in Cyprus 1927-1931*. Vol. III. (2 Vols: Text and Plates), by Einar GJERSTAD, John LINDROS, Erik SJÖQVIST, Alfred WESTHOLM. The Swedish Cyprus Expedition, Stockholm. 1937.
SMEA	*Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici*

SMSR	*Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*
Solunto 1994	*Solunto*, by Aldina CUTRONI TUSA, Antonella ITALIA, Daniela LIMA, and Vincenzo TUSA. Itinerari XV. Libreria dello Stato, Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Roma. 1994.
StS	*Studi Sardi*
Studia Phoenicia I-II	*I Redt Tyrus/Sauvons Tyr. II Histoire Phénicienne/Fenicische Geschiedenis*, edited by E. GUBEL, E. LIPINSKI, and B. SERVAIS-SOYEZ. Uitgeverij Peeters, Leuven. 1982.
Trans	*Transeuphratène*
UF	*Ugarit-Forschungen*
Viewpoint 1996	Viewpoint. Can We Interpret Figurines? *CAJ* 6 (1996): 281-307.
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*
ZDPV	*Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*

CHAPTER I

Introduction

'[...] the question "What is a Phoenician temple?" cannot on current evidence be answered.'

– A. T. REYES (1994: 128)

1.0 The tasks of the present work.

This thesis is a comparative study of non-funerary religious sites in the Phoenician and Punic world. It has been written with three aims in mind. First, it is a detailed study of the archaeological evidence of those sites which have been invariably classified in the literature as temples, sanctuaries, or shrines, in order to reveal the basis and criteria on which their religious nature has been defended. Secondly, through a comparative analysis I highlight the variability in the archaeological record, explain that variability, and show that essentially the question quoted above is misplaced. Thirdly, I want to make some points about the study of archaeology as a discipline because I believe that the debates that have afflicted it in the last two decades have masked the way in which *all* archaeologists go about making sense of their data, despite the "isms" they profess to be attached to.

When I started working on this research exercise four years ago I had in mind to look at Phoenician settlement patterns and investigate the impact these had on the indigenous communities the Phoenicians met in their ventures overseas. The interest

goes back to 1993 when I first visited Sardinia as an undergraduate and was introduced to a new and exciting archaeological landscape by the late Professor Gianni Tore. I soon realised, however, that the amount of information available regarding Phoenician urbanism was limited and that survey work on a serious scale had only recently been attempted by a Dutch team working on the Italian island, unravelling a rural world long suspected but never proven. I therefore chose to tackle the issue differently, influenced by my reading of François de Polignac's seminal work on the development of cult in the Greek colonial world (de Polignac 1995). A study of one aspect of settlement patterns, that relating to "religious territory", would allow me to see how the Phoenicians went about organising the territory they occupied, if such possessions were sanctified, if indigenous cults were incorporated or assimilated to Phoenician ones, and at what stage the religious sites took a form that rendered them visible in material and social terms. I had in mind to deal with the western and middle Mediterranean, but soon realised that the Phoenician story started in the East. I also realised that to make a coherent account possible I could not use the data and move on, because it was not altogether clear why certain buildings and certain artefacts were commensurate with a religious interpretation. The task I set myself, and which forms the core of this work, was to seek to understand why certain sites are religious and others are not, on the basis of a few principles I set out and follow. I started off with de Polignac but found a world at odds with the Greek concept of religious space.

There are major problems in a study of this sort; if there weren't this would not be the first attempt to tackle the subject. The Phoenicians appear on the scene of history when writing was available, but despite inventing the alphabet adopted by the Greeks in which I now write, no ancient source has made an attempt at writing a Phoenician history. If such an attempt was made it has not survived and it is unlikely, though not impossible, that one will ever be found. As a result, the study of Phoenician and Punic religious sites has developed within a straitjacket of biblical and classical scholarship: Solomon's temple and the Canaanite "high places" have served as lynch pins in any discussion on the subject for more than a century, when in reality neither one nor the other have yet yielded to archaeological evidence. The result has

been a huge cacophony of confused writing, of a process of interpretation which is circular, and an intricate web of *non sequiturs* that, like a house of cards, crumbles as one element that holds the rest is removed. Conscious of this fact when I embarked on the present study, I decided to approach the theme from an archaeological perspective and to relegate the textual references to chapter epigraphs so that they act as a stark reminder that the picture we are creating is incomplete. Here, I am not arguing that we should choose between incompatible alternatives, rejecting an account based on an analysis of textual sources for one based solely on archaeological evidence. In some Italian academic circles, where the methods of prehistorians are eschewed, this would raise a few eyebrows and elicit signs of disapproval; others will contend, amongst them my undergraduate tutor, that the middle way, the "British way" as I have heard it being called, is the best approach. For this study I follow the archaeological line of inquiry, led strictly by context, and refer to texts only where I feel it is justified, hoping that this results in a shift in our thinking of Phoenician and Punic religious sites.

Implicit in a comparative approach is the tenet that we compare like with like. This point is of fundamental importance, especially when large temporal spans are considered in the hope that changes in a particular situation are detected, which is exactly the case here. In dealing with the Phoenicians this problem is not simply of fixing a chronology and establishing cultural typologies for one region, and then to study an issue diachronically there. The Phoenicians, for reasons which need not be rehearsed here, decided to embark on trade ventures which took them all over the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic. So the task of studying their material remains takes an altogether different shape, and much effort has to be spent in trying to fit, if I am allowed the metaphor, the cog wheels of one part of the Mediterranean with those of another. Such an approach is hardly attempted in the discipline, and researchers, for reasons that all too often border on politics, set their own agenda and work in total isolation; timely pleas for multi-disciplinary collaboration have largely gone unheeded (Wilson 1986). Bringing together the relevant bibliography becomes something approaching a gargantuan task, where "details" of an excavation are buried in obscure journals or elusive exhibition catalogues published by wealthy institutions and given

away as gifts to friends and colleagues: obtaining them becomes something of a status symbol! The exercise is further complicated when the results of early, and even recent, excavations are considered to reveal a lack of stratigraphic recording which greatly complicates attempts to interpret the site. The published accounts vary enormously in detail and while we can feel admiration for Theodore Macridy's efforts at Bostan esh-Sheikh in Lebanon in 1901, where with an eye for a problem he turned an antiquarian-style hunt for inscriptions into a proper excavation, with proper sondages, and proper drawings (1902: 500), we cannot but feel overwhelmed at the way the vast clearance operations – "excavations" would be too generous a term – at Tharros in Sardinia were undertaken fifty years later when cash poured in from the *cassa per il mezziogiorno* to develop the island's tourism potential (Pesce 1966b). But character assassinations are never in order because everyone errs. It does come as a surprise, however, that the best preliminary reports on any one site considered in this work come not from the central Mediterranean where a school of Phoenician and Punic studies has flourished beyond the limits that could have been envisaged thirty years ago, but instead from Kommos on the south coast of Crete, from the pen of a scholar who is in a sense on the fringe of it all.

A substantial part of the work for this thesis has been carried out in libraries in England, Sardinia and Malta. It was decided from the start that constraints of time and money would have made it impossible to pursue hands-on research on the material from each and every site mentioned in the text. I obviously am aware that this is a shortcoming and that had I spent time in museum stores I would probably have made different judgements and answered more questions. That, I believe, is a lifetime's work to be conducted with others and I hope an exercise which will keep me busy for a while. Instead, site visits, limited to Syria, Sicily, Sardinia, Tunisia, Malta, and southern Spain, have enabled me to get a feeling for the sites studied and to put the objects and material, on display in museums, in their proper archaeological context. Participation in an excavation at Tas-Silg in Malta, moreover, provided the flavour of what the whole thing I was working on was all about. The "holidays" recommended for graduate students by the University were spent on sailing boats in the Mediterranean, coming to grips with the issues I raise in one part of this work.

In the rest of this chapter I will define the spatial and temporal contexts of this study, look at the ways scholars have approached Phoenician and Punic religion, and how they have attempted a definition of religious sites. In CHAPTER II I examine critically the framework within which archaeologists have inferred religious activity from archaeological evidence, and present the approach and the principles I find more useful in tackling the sites in the next chapter. At this point I discuss the basic archaeological problems of stratigraphic control and historic reconstruction for each site taken in isolation, highlighting those aspects of material culture which are worth pursuing, while the mistakes and dead-ends are stressed and swiftly abandoned. In CHAPTER IV I draw up a balance sheet for the preceeding chapter and, through a comparative approach, I look for patterns to define the characteristics that constitute Phoenician and Punic religious space. In CHAPTER V I seek to balance the detail of the preeeding two chapters by generalisations, and by painting a broader picture of Phoenician and Punic society as we know it through a study of religious sites. In the final chapter I sum up the conclusions and suggest areas where efforts should be spent in order to gain a better picture of Phoenician and Punic religion.

1.1 The spatial and temporal contexts of this study: defining "Phoenician", "Punic" and "Carthaginian".

Before approaching the archaeological data we have to define the spatial and temporal parameters of our inquiry, to set the scene and introduce the protagonists. Setting geographical and chronological boundaries to a study of Phoenician culture is, however, fraught with a number of difficulties. The name by which we know the Phoenicians today is Greek and it was used by the Greeks at least from about the eighth century BC to designate the country of the *phoínikes*, Phoenicia (*Phoiníke*) (Moscati 1988; Mazza 1995). We do not know what the Phoenicians called themselves: although 'Canaanite' appears to be a possibility (Frendo 1993), the probability is that they referred to themselves by the name of their city of origin: Sidonians, Tyrians, Giblites, and so forth; this is how they are recorded in Assyrian annals and by Homer (*cf.* Bonfante 1941). Their country was limited to the line of

cities on headlands and tiny offshore islands, along the Mediterranean coast, including from north to south, Aradus, Tripolis, Byblos, Berytus, Sidon and Tyre. Eastwards, the narrow coastal plain backed gradually into the mountain-chains of the Jebel Ansariyeh to the north and Mount Lebanon to the south, to a line of conspicuous summits that overlooked the Orontes Valley. This 30 km.-wide coastal plain was divided into autonomous city-territories where rivers acted as natural boundaries: the Leontes or Litani river (El-Qasamiye) separated Sidon and Tyre, cutting inland up the Bekaa valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains; the river Eleutheros (Nahr el-Kebir) separated Aradus from Tripolis and Byblos. During the course of the first millennium BC Phoenician influence spread north and south of the coastal plain just described, and some modern authors would see Phoenician territory extending beyond these confines to include an area from Mount Cassius in Syria to Dor in Israel (e.g. Gras *et al.* 1995: 30; Lipinski 1995c: 1321). But it is arguable how "Phoenician" such territory in reality was, as we will have opportunity to discuss elsewhere (CHAPTER IV). For the purposes of the present work, "Phoenicia" will be employed purely as a geographic term to mean the coastal area stretching about 200 km. from the offshore island of Arwad to the promontory of Mount Carmel; this is the Phoenician homeland, what Josette Elayi (1982) aptly called the 'stable kernel of ancient Phoenicia'. An idea of the distances involved is provided by the detailed diaries kept by the American philologist and geographer Edward Robinson during the travels he completed in the Levant in 1838: it took Robinson five days to arrive at Beirut via Tyre and Sidon from Safed in northern Galilee (a distance of about 120 km.) of which exactly 31 hours 45 minutes were spent on the move, travelling by mule (Robinson 1841: 365-451, Appendix I C: 85-86).

Our investigation should ideally start around 1200 BC, when common opinion places the beginning of the Levantine Iron Age and particularly the floruit of Phoenician culture. For the purposes of this study, however, this date is an awkward terminus: an earlier one would extend the study into the "Canaanite" Late Bronze Age making it possible, at least in theory, to investigate claims of cultural continuity

beyond this artificial breakpoint in the historical chronology;[1] a later date, say 969 BC would seem to be more appropriate for it marks the beginning of Hiram I's reign at Tyre and the start of this city's aspirations to found a commercial network in the Levant and in the Mediterranean (Stieglitz 1990; Aubet 1994: 48-54). But neither option is any real improvement for the simple reason that the earliest putative religious building in the Phoenician homeland dates to a later date, the end of the ninth century BC, the time when Phoenician pottery appears in recognisable quantities in settlements west of Cyprus.[2] For a comparative study, such as the present one, this important datum links East with West and provides the beginnings of a basis on which to claim shared idioms of expression between Phoenicians at home and overseas. In chronological terms, therefore, the boundaries of this study have to be set loosely, and although the earliest site to be studied is the one just mentioned at Sarepta, reference will be made to sites dating to an earlier period when this is justified.

After the ninth century the history of Phoenicia becomes the history of new eastern empires, first the Assyrian and the Neo-Babylonian (586-539 BC), then the Persian (539-332 BC) where the Phoenicians played a decisive role in the invasions of Xerxes and Darius into Greece. Tyre was conquered in 332 BC by Alexander the Great in the wake of Macedonian expansion in the East; thereafter, Phoenicia falls to the Alexandrian Ptolemies and the Syrian Seleucids when it welcomed cultures passing through it. Again, setting a breakpoint at this end would be inappropriate: 64

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[1] Such claims have found support in the uninterrupted stratigraphies at Tyre (Bikai 1978: 74) and Sarepta (Anderson 1988: 424; Khalifeh 1988: 161). This would show that both sites escaped the turmoil which is apparent at other coastal sites, north and south of Phoenicia, around 1200 BC. Moreover, recent work arising from a comparative study of Ugaritic and Iron Age Phoenician source material is showing that Phoenician culture is linked to this Canaanite sub-stratum (Garbini 1993; *cf* Albright 1961), and revisions to earlier pronouncements (e.g. Röllig 1985) are being called for (Röllig 1995: 211-212).

[2] The Phoenician colonial phenomenon started *after* 1000 BC and closer to the ninth century, when definite changes are noted in the material culture; a theory of a precolonial phase (*Momenti precoloniali* 1988) that would bridge the gap between the high chronology of the literary sources and the low chronology provided by the archeology, has not yielded to the archaeological evidence. Of the three main Phoenician pottery groups – bichrome ware, black-on-red ware, and red-slip ware (Culican 1982b, Anderson 1990) – it is the latter that the Phoenicians take with them to the West, where it appears in the earliest levels at Phoenician settlements west of Cyprus, while the first two are limited to the Levantine coast and Cyprus in contexts dated to before the early ninth century BC (Lipinski 1995c: 1324). Fine wheel-burnished red-slipped vessels which are a hallmark of the Phoenician pottery repertoire in the West, including the trefoil-mouth jug and mushroom-lip jug, become predominant in secure stratigraphic contexts at Tyre (Stratum V-IV) and Sarepta (Area II, Y, Stratum C) at about 800 BC (Bikai 1978: 15, 37, 75, Table 15; Anderson 1988: 425).

BC marks the beginning of Roman authority in what was the old Seleucid state, the end of a Hellenistic Phoenicia. Such chronological distinctions are in a sense artificial, and as Grainger points out (1991: 159), the dates serve to mark the arrival of successive groups preying on Levantine wealth. Meanwhile, it is of interest in this study to highlight those instances where Phoenician cultural traits survived these events.

Beyond their homeland in the Levant, the Phoenicians will be followed along the seaways of the Mediterranean, where they settled in places that followed the pattern of settlement of their parent cities: on offshore islands,[3] along headlands,[4] and at river estuaries;[5] good anchorage and harbour facilities are clearly essential determinants of this pattern, recognised years ago by Pierre Cintas during his pioneering survey work along the coasts of the Maghreb in search of a 'Punic landscape' (Cintas 1954). Only for Malta do we suppose a different settlement pattern with rock-cut cemetries surrounding the *inland* plateau of the Rabat-Mdina area where the archaic city must have stood (Ciasca 1982, 1995b; Vidal Gonzáles 1996: fig. 63).

The Latin authors referred to the Phoenicians of North Africa by the terms *poenus* and *phoenix*, a transcription from the Greek *phoinix*; the English term 'Punic' is derived from the adjectives *punicus* and *poenicus*. Following common practice (Moscati 1988), to which no objection need be made, the term is used here to denote the culture to which the Phoenician metropolis Carthage was guardian from about the sixth century BC down to its destruction in 146 BC, during which time the city assumed political hegemony of the Phoenician possessions in the central and western Mediterranean. 146 BC will provide a convient terminus for our investigations, although the fuzziness of chronological boundaries set for the Levant holds as well here, as in all the other Phoenician territories which were eventually annexed by Rome. The Phoenicians in the west before the sixth century will be referred to as

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[3] Like Tyre and Arwad: Motya (Sicily); Sant'Antioco (Sardinia); Cádiz, Cerro del Villar, Morro de Mezquitilla (Spain); Rachgoun (Algeria); Mogador (Morocco).

[4] Like Sidon and Byblos: Carthage (Tunisia); Palermo (Sicily); Bithia, Cagliari, Nora, Tharros (Sardinia); Chorreras (Spain).

[5] Like Beirut: Bosa (Sardinia); Almuñécar, Castillo de Doña Blanca, Toscanos (Spain); Lixus (Morocco).

'western Phoenicians', those after that date 'Punic'. Unfortunately, those who write in the English language lack a plural for the term 'Punic', which is otherwise present in Italian (*punici*), Spanish (*púnicos*) and French (*puniques*) to denote the people. As such, this collective term will have to be followed, albeit pedantically, by words like 'settlers', 'people', and so forth. Carthage before the sixth century BC will be 'Phoenician Carthage', after that date 'Punic' and its people 'Carthaginian'. 'Punic' will also be used for that phase of the Phoenician language which undergoes changes, together with its script, in the central and western Mediterranean, after the sixth century BC (Amadasi Guzzo 1997: 317).

1.2 Past approaches to a study of Phoenician and Punic religious ritual.

'La religion phénicienne n'est encore que très imparfaitement connue.' (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 55)

'Sulla religione dei Fenici sappiamo tutti troppo poco perché sia lecito tracciare non dico un panorama di certezza, ma anche solo una coerente gerarchia di problemi. Il lavoro è tutto da fare [...]' (Grottanelli 1981b: 109)

A coherent study of the development of cult in the Phoenician and Punic world remains to be written. The two statements quoted here were written almost a hundred years apart, but what the authors argue is almost identical despite the time gap. Yet, in their apparent similarity lies an important difference. The first statement is taken from a monumental volume on the art of Phoenicia and Cyprus written at a time when the results of Renan's survey of Phoenician remains in the Levant were becoming known to the scholarly world. The second is a response to a paper (Xella 1981) delivered on occasion of the Rome congress about Phoenician religion (*Religione Fenicia* 1981). Whereas the first work is one of the most comprehensive and coherent treatments on the history of the Phoenicians in all its subjects (and not just art as the title might imply), combining an analysis of textual and archaeological evidence even in the discussion of religion and cult sites (more below), the congress proceedings are rather disappointing in the lack of treatment of archaeological evidence when discussing ritual and religion. This critique is not meant to jettison completely the congress

proceedings; the articles contained in the volume remain a benchmark in their attempt to start addressing the issues relating to a specific aspect of the history of the Phoenicians in the east and in the west. The message which came out of the congress, however, was loud and clear: the approach for a study of religion has to be an historical one. The researcher has to be first and foremost an historian conversant with documentary sources: ancient languages, the Bible, and epigraphy. Archaeological evidence is important but secondary, 'subsidiary' in Xella's words (1981: 24).[6]

This approach has persisted in the literature dealing with Phoenician and Punic religion during the last two decades. Corinne Bonnet's opening comments in her recent monograph on the Phoenician god Melqart, is symptomatic of the historical method. She claims that the historian has access to two types of sources: written and archaeological or iconographic, and that, 'En toute logique, l'historien privilégiera des sources directes textuelles. La discrimination à l'égard des sources non écrites résulte de la difficulté de faire parler, et surtout de faire parler juste, des documents "muets" que, souvent, seul le regard de l'historien érige en sources du passé.' (Bonnet 1988: 4-5). The point I would like to make here is not to single the book out for criticism, since it remains a singularly clear and exhaustive treatment of the Phoenician deity; as such, it fills a huge gap in the literature and compliments an attempt to treat single aspects of Phoenician religion comprehensively before syntheses and summaries are proposed (e.g. Bonnet 1995, Xella 1991). But the book also provides an example of the approach to Phoenician religion by scholars who are first and foremost historians (*cf.* Ribichini 1995), and where the underlying belief is that archaeology is an 'auxiliary science' to history (*cf.* Bonnet 1995: 125-6). In these contexts, pronouncements about the scientific respectibility of the documentary sources stick out immediately (Xella 1981: 8). For Bonnet, for example, texts are fundamental 'pour comprendre les figurations, pour identifier un sanctuaire [...]' (1988: 5).

It is perhaps out of place to argue at length here against this image of archaeology, which prevailed in scholarly thinking of a few generations ago. It is worth pointing out, however, that historians of Phoenician religion have provided no

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[6] Xella's words are: 'costituisce l'unica garanzia di serietà scientifica' (1981: 8).

basis as to why texts should be more privileged than material remains. Historical archaeologists have often pointed out that texts preserve viewpoints of a select few in society (McGuire & Paynter 1991). Phoenician and Punic archaeologists *are* aware of this problem and a solution was sought in their studies of the ritual precincts called tophets. Here, particular interest has been shown in the results obtained from painstaking excavations to reconstruct a ritual which was so abhorred by Old Testament prophets and the Classical writers. The need to provide an account independent of the (biased) documentary sources was one successful attempt at writing archaeological history. Moreover, in all fairness it has to be said that the marked pessimism evident in Bonnet's statement quoted in full above has changed somewhat in her recent co-authored article with Paolo Xella, where both authors claim that non-textual sources should be given more prominence in the analysis of Phoenician religion (Bonnet & Xella 1995: 319; Bonnet 1995a: 124). However, in seeking a solution to the stagnant nature of their discipline by professing multi-disciplinarity for new breakthroughs, a diagnosis of the real problem has not been tackled. As I see it, the problem implicit in their approach to the study of religion is that while they stress the importance of understanding a text (using the appropriate methodology of literary criticism) before using it as an historical source, nothing is said about the proper understanding of the archaeological data before these are confronted with the interpretation given to the written sources. As it is, the feeling one gets from reading the relevant literature is that there seems to be a consensus amongst some archaeologists on what constitutes the sacred in material culture. The methods by which inferences are drawn, however, have usually been implicit. No attempt has been made to develop an approach that states explicity what the framework of inference is. Moreover, the literature is fraught with circular arguments where, for example, buildings are thought to be of a religious nature because they contain sacred objects which were found in other sites assumed *a priori* to be "shrines" or "sanctuaries". Labels given at the time of discovery have found a prominent place in the literature and scholars have been more interested in the conclusions reached than in the criteria adopted to define the religious nature of the objects or places.

One point needs to be stressed at this stage: nowhere above have I tried to argue for a divorce between the use of textual and archaeological evidence, and I do *not* intend to make such a claim because I intend using textual sources when appropriate. Many archaeologists working in an historical period (such as Iron Age Etruria or Greece) have been criticised for professing to write history based entirely and exclusively upon the results of archaeology when their account is actually peppered with quotations from Greek and Latin authors. The point I have tried to make above is that every kind of evidence, whether textual or archaeological, has its own interpretative problems and that in the context of Phoenician and Punic religion we are running a risk if we do not devise a way of studying the archaeological material without a thorough study of its archaeological context.

Before we turn from critique to something more constructive, we will consider in some detail the approach with which Phoenician and Punic archaeologists and historians of religion have tackled the identification of cult sites in the past. This will serve to put what I have just said above in context. In refuting the poor methodology adopted and highlighting exceptional contributions, I will then (CHAPTER II) offer a series of studies drawn from anthropological and archaeological work which will allow us to set criteria and draw up an inferential framework for discussing the sites discussed in detail in the next chapter (CHAPTER III).

1.3 Past approaches to a study of Phoenician and Punic religious sites.

The most comprehensive attempt at describing the religious architecture in Phoenicia and in the colonies was undertaken by Georges Perrot and Charles Chipiez when they published the third volume of their monumental work *Histoire de l'Art dans l'Antiquité*, which they devoted to *La Phénicie et ses Dépendances* (1885). By bringing together a vast number of documentary sources and the results of archaeological work of the time, the volume became a handbook for researchers, and it influenced scholars interested in the Phoenicians for decades. Chapter four, was devoted to religious architecture in Phoenicia (pp. 241-261), in Cyprus (pp. 261-291),

in Gozo and Malta (pp. 292-307), and in Sicily and Carthage (pp. 307-314). Finally, the authors grouped their comments on the general characteristics of the Phoenician temple in the end of the chapter (pp. 314-322).

For their description of the temples in Phoenicia the authors relied heavily on Renan's survey work, listing the 'tabernacle' at Amrith as the only Phoenician temple which survived down to their times (**FIGURE 4**). They refered to the monument with the word it was known to the inhabitants of the district: *el-Ma'abed*, meaning 'the temple'. The authors agreed with Renan on the Egyptian influence, seeing the monument as a reduction in scale of an Egyptian temple, and pointing out the similarities with another pair of tabernacles surveyed by Renan at nearby Aïn el-Hayât (the Spring of the Serpents) (**FIGURE 3**). Perrot & Chipiez in fact argued that the Phoenicians' idea to monumentalise in stone their cult places came from Egypt. For the first cult practiced by the tribes of Canaan did not involve works of architectural grandeur, a statue or a house for the god. The ritual took place in the open air, on 'high places' (*hauts lieux*) as described in the Bible. According to Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 56, 59) this 'primitive' ritual practice goes back to the early stages of the Phoenician occupation of Canaan and was a characteristic of their religious beliefs. A vivid description of this type of cult site could be found in the *Histories* of Tacitus (II, 78) where we are told how the Emperor Vespasian, visiting the famous oracle at Mount Carmel, could not find a temple but a simple open-air altar. According to Perrot & Chipiez, only later, in Greco-Roman times, was a monumental appearance given to the these cult places by building a colonnade around the hill (surveyed by Renan 1864: 687, 691-692), as an example. Perrot & Chipiez laid stress on the sense of the numinous, of mystery and of external power as central to Phoenician religious experience and thought that any feature in the natural topography could be sacred for the Phoenicians. Their ideas are worth quoting at length because in them one finds the source of endless subsequent descriptions regarding aspects of Phoenician religion:

> 'Leurs respects et leurs hommages s'adressaientaient à tout ce qui, dans la nature, frappait le plus fortement leurs yeux et leur imagination, à la source limpide et fraîche qui les désaltérait, au torrent dont les bruyantes colères les remplissaient de terreur, à l'arbre séculaire, à la montagne qui, toute noire de forêts, cachait souvent sa tête dans les nuages. Sur cette terre où nulle part la plaine n'a une grande étendue, où partout elle est limitée, à l'horizon, par des chaînes élevées et puissantes dont les cimes sont couvertes de neige pendant une partie de l'année, la montagne surtout était un grand fétiche [...]' (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 241)

Perrot & Chipiez looked for references to natural cult sites in the classical sources. According to Eusebius, the sacred grove and pool at Aphaca at the source of the river Adonis (the modern Nahr Ibrahim in the territory of Byblos) was the most celebrated holy place in Syria, which ran with blood each year to mark the murder of the deity (1885: 249).[7] Renan had conducted a search for temple remains in the area, on account of a reference in the Latin author Pseudo Lucian, but found only structures and monuments dating to Roman Imperial times: 'un art de décadence' (Renan 1864: 296-301). Perrot & Chipiez suggested that the cave at the bottom of the creek was sacred (1885: 59). As for constructed cult sites, the French scholars reported that none of the temples described by the Classical authors at Tyre, Sidon and Byblos, survived (1885: 249). As for the temple of Byblos, however, attention was given to the reverse of a third-century AD Roman coin from Byblos (1885: 60) which shows a pillar placed on top of a base in the centre of a colonnaded court adjoining a cella (**FIGURE 29a**). Perrot & Chipiez interpreted the conical stone as a symbol of the divinity, a baetyl, and concluded that the coin depicted a late temple attached to an earlier and primitive 'cloister with its baetyl' (1885: 248).

As for the installations and decorations inside a Phoenician temple in the homeland, Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 251) consulted the inscription of Yehawmilk (*CIS* I, 1), king of Byblos, which mentions a bronze altar, an interior decorated in gold, and a portico with columns. The limestone statuary discovered by Renan in a quarry at Amrith belonged to the temple there. One statue was identified with Hercules, but the lack of divine attributes for the rest and, 'le visage, la coiffure, tout est d'un simple mortel', suggested to the Frenchmen, that the statues portrayed distinct personages, undoubtedly princes or priests, who wanted to perpetuate their piety by erecting their image 'somewhere in the building' (1885: 254).

In discussing Cyprus, Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 263) lamented the fact that the British Government had not carried out excavations – on the scale undertaken by Renan and his team in Syria – to reveal important remains and survey what had survived from ancient times. As such, only few particulars and insufficient information was available on the religious architecture of Phoenician Cyprus.

As for the islands of Malta and Gozo, Perrot & Chipiez identified a number of megalithic constructions with the religious buildings of the Phoenicians. It would be unnecessary to go to great lengths to describe the Frenchmen's claims, suggestions and arguments in relation to the class of monuments which are now known to pre-date the arrival of the semitic colonists on the islands by more than a millennium and a half (Renfrew 1973). It is important to mention, however, what characteristics induced the French scholars to draw parallelisms between the Maltese monuments and the Phoenician East. For Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 294), the colossal stones employed in the Maltese monuments reminded them of the walls at Arwad surveyed by Renan and those at Baalbek, while the elliptical or apsidal nature of the temple 'halls' found close parallels in Cyprus. Moreover, at two of the sites (Ggantija on Gozo and Hagar Qim in Malta),[8] 'sacred cones' of stone (*cône sacré*, or *pierres de l'adoration*) had been reported, very similar to the one at Paphos in Cyprus and the other depicted on the coin from Byblos (1885: 306-7). They could not, however, explain the statuary – 'of an unbelievable barbarity' – from the Maltese temples by way of comparisons with elsewhere.

For Sicily, Sardinia and Carthage, Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 307ff.) resorted to the writings of the classical authors and to epigraphic evidence to infer the existence of Phoenician sanctuaries, because no structural remains were known at the time.

Towards the end of their account on Phoenician temples, Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 314) lamented the disappointing results of their research, despite their efforts in bringing together literary, epigraphic and archaeological sources. Nevertheless,

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[7] This idea is repeated word by word in Schmitz (1992: 361) in his discussion of 'Natural cult sites'.

[8] Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 293) identified the adjoining temples at Ggantija with two of the four sanctuaries mentioned in the Punic inscription from Gozo (*CIS* I, 132).

they thought that some general characteristics of a 'semitic temple' could be made out. They pointed out that the major difference between a Greek or Roman temple and a Phoenician one was that whereas in the Graeco-Roman world great attention was given to the *cella*, the Phoenicians' 'house of the god' was a very simple affair, including a small symbol representing the deity. Only the portico leading to it was architecturally rich. Perrot & Chipiez found analogies for this austerity in the Islamic world and saw the survival of the 'primitive baetyl' in the most important relic of Islam: the black stone at Mecca (1885: 315-316).

Few advances were made following the publication of Perrot's & Chipiez's volume. In fact, one can easily claim that for decades scholars interested in the field of Phoenician material culture in the homeland were essentially living off the work that these two scholars had put together. It would suffice to skim through the pages of George Rawlinson's comprehensive and exhaustive *History of Phoenicia* (1889) and Richard Pietchmann's *Storia dei Fenici* (1899) to notice the influence of the two erudite Frenchmen. Whereas Rawlinson was honoured to acknowledge their help in his preface, it is sad to note that others did not. For a while, until the western Mediterranean started unveiling its share of a Phoenician legacy, archaeological discoveries were simply added to the general framework laid out by Renan and Perrot & Chipiez. The first editions of Georges Conteneau's *La Civilisation Phénicienne* (1926) and Donald Harden's *The Phoenicians* (1962) refer to the "high places" as Phoenician sanctuaries of Canaanite origin. Both cite Vespasian's visit to Mt Carmel and both refer to the Byblos coin to describe the layout of a Phoenician temple. Conteneau (1949: 102-103), remarked that the coastal cities of Arwad and Gebal (Byblos) had their respective sanctuaries in the mountains, refering to the newly discovered sites at Baetocécé (Hosn-Sôleiman) and Bostan ech-Sheikh. According to Conteneau (1949: 99), the Phoenicians associated their deities with natural elements and places (e.g. mountains, water, trees), citing the sanctuary at Afka in the mountains of Lebanon as an example alongside the gods Baal-Liban, Baal-Hermon and Baal-Cassios. Harden remarked (1962: 90-94) that in the west, "high places" were often on low ground by the coast 'for the obvious reasons that the colonists did not usually acquire much country [...]'. He also classified the sacrificial precincts as a separate

type of Phoenician sanctuary, refering to them by the biblical name tophet (Harden 1962: 94-95), while Conteneau refered to them simply as 'sanctuaries' (1949: 111-112). It is surprising to see that Amrith is left out from Conteneau's discussion. Sabatino Moscati's *The World of the Phoenicians* (1968d) followed Harden very closely, making reference to Tacitus and to the coins, but his list of Phoenician shrines included also the 'apparently sacred buildings' uncovered by the Danish expedition at Tell Sukas in Syria. In all the general works on the Phoenicians, Solomon's temple in Jerusalem, which according to the Bible was built by Phoenician craftsmen, continues to be a convenient starting point for a description of Phoenician temples. Indeed, the tripartite layout of the temple has sometimes been held to be fundamental to recognise a building as Phoenician or Punic (Harden 1962: 91).

In Sardinia, the work of Gennaro Pesce and later of Ferruccio Barreca have had a lasting influence on scholars working in the central Mediterranean. Pesce's *Sardegna Punica* (1961: 56) classified Phoenician sanctuaries into two: first, the 'high places' of the Bible, 'simple and primitive', with an altar placed in a clearing on the peak of hills or mountains, and in a second phase, adorned with a flat rock-cut platform to burn victims; second, the great sanctuaries as depicted on coins. Pesce also claimed that Phoenician sacred places were oriented to the cardinal points by way of the corners of the buildings rather than by the sides as was the norm in the Graeco-Roman world. Barreca's fruitful career in Sardinia provided him with a larger number of sites from which to draw conclusions regarding the main characteristics of Phoenician and Punic religious sites (1986: 107-134). He listed these as follows (1986: 108, 116): the cult places were found on elevated areas because the worshipper was meant to ascend towards the divinity; the plan of the temples varies but it generally includes a chapel (*sacello*) of rectangular plan; the sanctuaries were orientated to the North when the terrain provided no obstacles; the area put aside for the killing of animals for sacrificial purposes was separate from the area intended for offerings; this separation was reflected in the partition of the shrine (*penetrale*); and, finally, the altar was usually rectangular in shape and low. Barreca also pointed out (1986: 107-8) that the interior of the sacred area had to be equipped with a basin for lustral water, a sacred grove which, he remarked, was not known archaeologically, a

baetyl, the *asheràt*, and the cult statue. Barreca claimed that the temple was meant for prayer and not as a house of the god as in the Classical world.

Despite the fact that more than one hundred years have passed since Perrot & Chipiez attempted a definition of Phoenician and Punic religious architecture based on material remains, a common opinion continues to prevail in the literature concerning the nature of Phoenician and Punic religious sites: *that it is impossible to establish a typology of them*. The reasons for this state of affairs vary. Whereas Cecchini (1992), for example, argues her claim by saying that very often the religious nature of a site has been given on no clear grounds and that successive rebuilding of certain sites has altered the original plans, historians of religion like Bonnet and Xella (1995: 333) simply state that an attempt to establish a typology of cult places would be 'un exercise qui ne présenterait qu' un intérêt douteaux'. I want to argue that the reason for the neglect of one very important aspect of Phoenician and Punic culture lies in the following inter-related observations, which will be put into context when the sites are discussed in CHAPTER III:

1) To date, there has not yet been a serious attempt to gather the archaeological data relating to Phoenician and Punic religious sites systematically. Estimates of the number and distribution of religious sites vary (see **Table 1.1**). Some scholars and sources, such as Moscati (1968d), Fantar (1986), Grottanelli (1981b), *DCPP* (pp. 387-389), Cecchini (1992), Yon (1995b), Lancel (1995b), have been cautious in including the sites in their lists but *neglect to state clearly the criteria for their selection.*

2) Some claims about the religious nature of particular sites or artefacts have remained unchallenged. The reason for this is not clear but in *certain* cases, where the evidence is too obvious to go unnoticed by competent archaeologists, one feels that conclusions reached would *not* be contradicted.[9]

3) As a result, the literature is replete with circular arguments based on conclusions which have been accepted uncritically to prove a point.

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[9] See David Ridgway's reference to 'polemical interpretations, crystalizing into dogma' (1989: 392).

4) Attempts to move beyond typological studies of artefacts coming from alleged religious sites have been few and far between. Discussion has rarely moved beyond a very general level and scholars have been more content to establish artistic and artefact styles. Questions pertinent to a consideration of religious ritual on the basis of the archaeological evidence, like for example, the exact findspot of an inscription, of a statue or of a pot, have not been put forward. Lurking beneath the lists of artefacts is a causality yet to be discovered.

I want to reject the pessimism showed by some scholars of Phoenician and Punic religion on the grounds that to reject anything at the outset without a serious consideration of possible approaches is an unproductive strategy. One can never know how hard a problem is until one tries to solve it. On the other hand, in rejecting the poor methodology adopted in the past, I do not want to abandon wholly some of the important insights that some scholars have established. What I am arguing for is a widening of perspective, of approaching a study of Phoenician and Punic religious sites systematically, to be sensitive to the archaeological record and to the formation processes behind it, to ask new questions and, hopefully, to create a basis for the assessment of future finds. This will involve going back to the original site reports when they exist and to assess what past excavators have made of their data. Before proceeding to present those data we have to define a framework which will prove more profitable than the previous attempts to study the sites. We have to set forth the criteria that will allow us to identify ritual in the archaeological record and the questions that we want to ask about that record.

Table 1.1 Religious sites appearing in four research aids on Phoenician and Punic culture and civilisation.

SITES[1]	*DCPP*[2] Gubel, Yon & Cecchini 1992	*Dizionario*[2] Cecchini 1992	*CPP* Yon 1995b, Lancel 1995b	*Dieux et Déesses de' l'Univers ...* Lipinski 1995a[3]
SYRIA				
Aïn el-Hayât, Amrith		×		
Ma'abed, Amrith	×	×	×	×
Sukas	×			×
LEBANON				
Bostan esh-Sheikh	×	×	×	×
Byblos	×	×		
Kharayeb	×		×	×
Oumm el-'Amed	×		×	×
Sarepta	×	×	×	
Wasta				×
CYPRUS				
Kition-Kathari	×	×	×	
Kition-Bamboula	×	×		
Meniko, Litharkes				
GREECE				
Kommos, Crete				
MALTESE ISLANDS				
Tas-Silg, Malta	×	×	×	×
Zurrieq Tower, Malta				
ITALY: MAINLAND				
Pyrgi		×		
ITALY: SICILY				
Erice				
Grotta Regina	×	×		×
Monte Adranone	×	×		
Mozia (Cappiddazzu)	×	×	×	×
Solunto	×	×		
ITALY: SARDINIA				
Antas	×	×	×	×
Temple of Bes, Bithia	×	×		
Capo Sant'Elia, Cagliari				
Via Malta, Cagliari	×	×		
Matzanni				
Mastio, Monte Sirai			×	
High Place, Nora				
Ma'abed, Nora				×
High Place, Sant'Antioco				
Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao				
Capo San Marco, Tharros				
Temple K, Tharros				

Table 1.1 (*Cont.*) Religious sites appearing in four research aids on Phoenician and Punic culture and civilisation.

SITES[1]	*DCPP*[2] Gubel, Yon & Cecchini 1992	*Dizionario*[2] Cecchini 1992	*CPP* Yon 1995b, Lancel 1995b	*Dieux et Déesses de' l'Univers* ... Lipinski 1995a[3]
Doric ½-columns, Tharros	×	×		
Semitic plan, Tharros				
Cornice blocks, Tharros				
SPAIN: MAINLAND				
Gorham's Cave, Gibraltar				
SPAIN: BALEARICS				
Cueva de Es Cuieram, Ibiza	×	×		×
Illa Plana, Ibiza				
TUNISIA				
Carton Chapel, Carthage				×
Sidi-bou-Saïd, Carthage			×	
Kerkouane, Cap Bon			×	×
Ras ed-Drek, Cap Bon				

[1] It should be noted that the designation of the sites in this list as 'temples' or 'sanctuaries' is at this stage following convention as received in the literature, and that their religious status remains to be established.

[2] References for the dictionaries were taken from the entry for 'sanctuaries, temples'.

[3] References are taken from pp. 421-438 where the author discusses 'Sanctuaires naturels' and 'Temples'.

CHAPTER II

A Methodology For An Archaeology Of Religious Ritual

'The interpretation of a building complex apparently devoted primarily to religious observances is a highly difficult undertaking.'

– C. RENFREW (1985: 361)

'[...] much of human life is based on the presupposition that we share meanings with others, that we are able to interpret their actions and the objects they produce in the way they intended.'

– H. MORPHY (1989: 8)

'The problem is that there are very few real archaeologists about, that is, people who work from material to ideas, their numbers are getting less rather than more [...]'

– R. REECE (1996: 1)

2.0 Introduction.

It is commonplace that in archaeology religion has often been considered an area of study which warrants particular attention. As we have seen in the preceding chapter, in Phoenician and Punic archaeology the study of religious ritual on the basis of material remains alone lies somewhere between the scepticism and pessimism of the historian of religions on one hand, and of the marked optimism of the archaeologist on the other. Few attempts have been made to steer a path between the two extremes. In this chapter an attempt is made to define a methodology, a framework, to guide us in our investigation and interpretation of the sites discussed in

CHAPTER III. But first we should provide some definitions of the terms used in this work.

2.1 Definition of basic terms.

Religion. Any archaeologist will admit that a definition of the term 'religion' is a difficult one (Renfrew 1994a: 47). Whitehouse (1992: 2) has recently pointed out that 'there is no universally accepted definition of religion used in sociology and anthropology' and she refers her readers to a good synthesis by Brian Morris (1987) for a discussion of differing opinions. Without going into the intricacies of these discussions, it will suffice to say for our present purposes that religion implies a *belief* or *a set of beliefs* and *practices* directed towards a divine power which is superior to the human subject and which transcends the everyday material world.

Religious ritual. By definition ritual means 'an often repeated series of actions'. Religious ritual (as distinct from secular ritual), involves the carrying out of *expressive acts of worship, reverence and obedience to a divine power*. In an important article, Roy Rappaport pointed out that ritual implies *performance* and that to be valid ritual must be performed repeatedly in certain prescribed ways (1979: 176; also Lewis 1980). This approach implies that bodily movement and gestural performance become principal features of ritual (Parkin 1992).

John Barrett (1996: 396) argues that 'ritual is made up of actions, not things' and that 'there are no such things as "ritual sites" or "ritual objects"'. Although these terms have found acceptance in the literature to define objects or places which are connected with religious rites (*The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. Vol XIII: 991-2), I will be adopting the terms 'religious' or 'sacred'. This will allow the use of labels free of the implications that words such as 'temple' and 'sanctuary' usually carry.

2.2 The sources.

Colin Renfrew (1985: 12) has drafted a hierarchy of sources which are available to the anthropologist in the study of religious ritual. These have been paraphrased by Morris (1992: 10) to include:

'1. Direct observation/participation of the rituals
2. Verbal testimony, oral or written, describing or explaining the rituals
3. Artistic representation of the rituals
4. The material remains of rituals.'

The first category is unavailable to the Phoenician archaeologist. The second class is usually available to the ethnographer who is told about the religious beliefs and practices of a community by an observer or participant. In our study, it would have been very informative had the Phoenicians left extensive written sources describing and perhaps explaining their religion, their beliefs, and their myths. But this is hardly the case, and the writings that discuss their rituals come from the hands of the Biblical prophets and the Classical writers, which do not exactly give us an objective and impartial view of Phoenician religious practices. What we possess which is strictly from Phoenician hands is plenty at first sight: about 10,000 inscriptions written in Phoenician and Punic have been recorded (Bonnet 1995a: 123); but the information is largely repetitive, short, and sometimes of an uncertain reading, with a vast majority of the inscriptions coming from funerary contexts (tophets).[1] We even have sacrificial tariffs inscribed on stelae which speak of the payments the priests get for different sacrifices (Xella 1997).[2] But despite the interesting information they contain, they include no details of the actual rites involved or of the reasons that instigated the sacrifices. The scarcity and nature of written testimony from Phoenician hands makes this class of data of very limited use. We do have, however, inscriptions of a truly votive and commemorative character which comply

[1] Unfortunately, no comprehensive study has as yet been made of Phoenician and Punic (including Neopunic) inscriptions which would indicate their archaeological context and how well-documented the latter in reality is.

with specific literary structures and formulas (Amadasi Guzzo 1989-1990; 1997: 323). But unfortunately, the archaeological context in which they are found is very often readily dismissed in epigraphic accounts, with the result that they remain aloof of the religious context to which they belong. Indeed, such inscriptions should best be treated as part of the fourth class for they too belong to all intents and purposes to the material remains of rituals.

The third class, the pictorial evidence, involves a study of the depictions which might portray deities, mythical events and personages, or the ritual practices being carried out. It is here that the archaeologist often encounters the symbols and the iconography which structure the religious beliefs of the participants. In Phoenician and Punic archaeology the richest iconography is associated with funerary remains. Hundreds, thousands even, of stelae from tophets have produced representations which are taken to represent deities and religious symbols (S. Brown 1991). But the point to stress here is that the objects themselves, the stelae and the *cippi*, have no meaning if they are divorced from their ritual context. It is the context which conveys an idea of *intention* and *expression*, and which allows us to treat the symbolism in a way which is commensurate with a religious interpretation. And that is why this material has to be treated in the light of the fourth category. As will be argued below, establishing the archaeological context should be the first step in our inquiry.

The material remains of rituals, the fourth class, are the "bread-and-butter" of the archaeologist in general, and the prehistorian in particular. These are the material results of actions and they include a vast array of data. In the case of religious ritual, the data may include votive offerings and dedicatory inscriptions. But certainly not all the actions have material correlates in the record. Dance, song, prayer, and silence, for example, simply *cannot* be recovered by the archaeologist, nor may artefacts which are not preserved in the ground. This point should be spelled out clearly: *the picture which we hope to construct from material remains is fragmentary from the*

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[2] One was found in Marseille but actually refers to a temple of Baal Saphon at Carthage (*KAI* 69). Others were found in Carthage itself (*KAI* 74; *CIS* I, 3915; 3916 = *KAI* 75; *CIS* I, 3917 = *KAI* 76).

outset.[3] The crux of the matter lies with inferring religious ritual from the material remains, a discussion which will take up the rest of this chapter.

2.3 Recent approaches in the archaeology of religious ritual.

The lack of a methodology for reconstructing religion in prehistoric societies has always been a matter of debate amongst scholars. When Kent Flannery sought to study the importance of religion for the evolution of complex society in the Valley of Oaxaca in Mexico, he remarked how archaeologists often resorted to "divine inspiration" when handling religious matters. Flannery concluded that the reason for this state of affairs lies in the fact that archaeologists had '*absolutely no coherent and consistent theoretical framework by means of which ritual or religious data can be analyzed and interpreted.*' (Flannery 1976b: 329-333) The most eloquent attempt to tackle this problem has been made by Colin Renfrew, whose work at Phylakopi on the island of Melos in Greece led him to build a general theory about religion and then to make predictions about what a sanctuary should look like in the archaeological record (Renfrew 1985). But Renfrew's work has been criticised by Ian Hodder, his colleague at Cambridge, for the apparent contradictions in his theoretical approach. In the following pages I have decided to concentrate on their discussions simply because their work has had a considerable impact on archaeology. Indeed, each theoretician can be taken as a spokesman for a large body of opinion among archaeologists (mostly British and American), and a consideration of their work should therefore carry more force.

2.3.1 Colin Renfrew's *Archaeology of Cult.*

When Colin Renfrew proposed a framework within which to infer cult practice from the archaeological record — in part, a clear response to the problems to which Flannery drew attention — he established a list of criteria for identifying a site as a

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[3] See the pertinent words of Andrew Millard (1990: 21).

'shrine': 'a location set aside for the practice of religious ritual' (1985: 393). Let us examine his sophisticated contribution a bit more closely.

Following the definition that 'religious belief asserts the existence of some transcendental, supernatural force or power' and that the purpose of cult is 'to bring participating humans into more direct contact with these transcendental realities', Renfrew pointed out two fundamental aspects of sacred ritual (Renfew 1985: 16):

1) the religious experience takes places in a special location, a *liminal boundary zone* between this world and the next , as Leach (1976) calls it, whether it is natural or constructed for the purpose; special devices are usually employed to induce a sense of awe and to direct the attention of the worshipper and to serve as a means of bridging the gap between this world and the other world beyond;

2) it entails worship; the power of the deity is acknowledged by acts of propitiation, by expressive actions or special gestures of adoration, and offerings, often of material objects, to the deity; the transfer of things to the deity is an act of bridging the gulf between this world and the world beyond. Dance, song, noise, fasting, drugs or stimulants can be used to induce a sense of awe.

Renfrew argues that these points are 'near universals of religious behaviour', and that considerations like the ones above, which are necessary ingredients for religious ritual, allow the formulation of a series of indicators or correlates which can reasonably suggest to the archaeologist that religious ritual has taken place at a particular site (Renfew 1985: 18-19; 1994a: 51; Renfrew & Bahn 1996: 391-2). At the risk of oversimplification, these indicators can be summarised as follows:

Location: Ritual may take place in a spot with special, natural associations (e.g. cave, grove, spring, mountain top) or it may take place in a special building. The important point is that the liminal zone is set apart from the surroundings and this is reflected in the architectural delimitation of the area that may restrict or control access

to the sacred area. The concept of cleanliness within this boundary zone may be reflected in the facilities (e.g. pools or basins of water).

Equipment: For a participant to reach a state of awe and heightened awareness a range of *attention focusing devices* can be used. These are reflected in the architecture, fixtures (e.g. altars, benches, hearths), and in movable equipment (e.g. lamps, gongs, bells, ritual vessels, censers, altar cloths). The presence of the deity or transcendent force may be reflected in the use of a symbol or cult image: this may serve to reinforce what is already known and perhaps to act as a mnemonic or reminder. Often the symbols employed may relate to those seen also in funerary rituals or other rites of passage. Participation in the ritual involves demands on the celebrant which might include not only words and gestures of prayer that might be reflected in the art or iconography or decorations or images, but also transfer of material things to the deity. Special portable equipment (paraphernalia) might be employed (e.g. vessels, lamps), and votive offerings made.

Renfrew argues that to establish religious practice it is not enough to obtain a reasonable score from the list of material correlates or 'check list' that he provides but that somehow the archaeologist is able to identify evidence for, (1) expressive actions, and (2) some indications that a non-terrestrial transcendent being is involved. Renfrew admits that the difficulty lies in ascertaining that the expressive actions are not the results of mundane, secular activities. After all, play is a ritual of sorts, undertaken following well-defined rules. He points out that one defining criterion of the sacred is that it is not profane and that therefore an assemblage 'should not be explicable in secular terms in the light of what we know of the society' (1985: 20; 1994a: 52).

2.3.2 Ian Hodder's critique.

One archaeologist who has criticised Renfrew's work is Ian Hodder. Hodder has argued that Renfrew's attempt to build a general theory about religion and to

predict from it what a sanctuary should look like in the archaeological record is contradictory in principle (1992: 152). Hodder claims that there are problems with constructing general theories, deducing testable propositions and proving or disproving them against the sampled data, because archaeologists *know* their data when they decide upon a particular interpretation and propose theoretical conclusions. In other words, in presenting their work archaeologists like Renfrew 'rewrote the script, placing the theory first and claiming to have tested it against data which they discovered, as in an experiment under laboratory conditions' (1992: 213).[4] In the *Archaeology of Cult* Renfrew tells us to look out for indicators such as attention-focusing devices, boundary markers between the sacred and profane, images of the divine, and evidence for offerings. Hodder has asked, 'but just how are we to recognize these indicators in the archaeological record?' He argues that 'to assert that a bench focused the attention of those in a building assumes that "we" can experience a building as "they" did', despite Renfrew's own adamant opposition to such intuitive leaps (1985: 394). Renfrew has contradicted his claim for an *objective* hypothesis-testing procedure by having to say what the past means: 'we cannot "test" the cult hypothesis against *objective* data, because in order to do so we have to *interpret* what the bench, the image, the gestures and so on meant in each context' (Hodder & Preucel 1996: 308; my emphasis).

Although Renfrew's approach was primarily meant to break the circular reasoning according to which shrines were identified in the Aegean because they looked like other shrines in the Aegean (1985: 365), Renfrew was compelled to take into account interpretation of archaeological evidence from other sites to prove the religious nature of the Phylakopi sanctuary in a more conclusive way. As one reviewer of Renfrew's work has rightly pointed out (Warren 1986), the methodology adopted in *The Archaeology of Cult* which concentrates on detailed contextual analysis and comparisons, and from which analysis general patterns are recoverable, is 'not hypothetico-deductive at all, but essentially inductive'. It is a method which is all the time being used by archaeologists. Interpretation in archaeology involves a

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[4] The logical fallacies present in the hypothetico-deductive method are discussed in Courbin (1988: 128-131) where he remarks that the validation stage is false because 'the premises are formulated for the needs of the cause' (p. 130); also p. 21.

constant toing-and-froing between hypotheses and data. An archaeologist about to excavate a site brings forward a multitude of questions, ideas and problems. There is no point in claiming that the archaeologist approaches a site and the data with a completely blank mind. Hodder argues thus: 'Undoubtedly, the data that we collect are 'prefigured'. We expect certain things and our interpretations are lying in wait for them, already formed. We pounce and may feel satisfied, confirmed. Or we may find that the data do not really conform to our expectations. In this case we adjust our theories, but always in relation to more general theories which we have espoused or taken for granted.' (Hodder 1992: 213) Hodder and other post-processual archaeologists have referred to this process of *thinking*, *acting* and *interpreting* as the 'hermeneutic procedure' (1992: 213) and they claim that hermeneutics and dialectics are one way forward in archaeological interpretation to avoid the contradictions that a positivist hypothetico-deductive method entails (Hodder & Preucel 1996: 671; Hodder & Shanks 1995: 8; Johansen & Olsen 1992).

2.3.4 Bridging the "divide".

So where do we stand? On one hand, we have seen how Renfrew argues that the identification of archaeological remains with activities of a religious nature should be done within an explicit framework of inference where a list of criteria is provided. On the other hand, we have seen how Hodder moves away from this "testing" of theories to a process of interpretation which unravels itself as one works with the data. Both scholars are supposedly at opposing ends of archaeological discourse, but I want to argue that, in reality, behind the rhetoric employed by these two skilled theoreticians, there is a convergence in the way that ritual is inferred from the archaeological record. In order to argue this claim, I will juxtapose an extract from the respective works of these two scholars. One is taken from Renfrew's *Archaeology of Cult* (1985) while the other is from Hodder's synthetic account of his excavations at the causewayed enclosure at Haddenham in England (1992: 213-240). The first

professes to be an exercise in processual middle-range theory, while the other that it is post-processual.[5]

> 'This find of so many figurines and fragments was certainly out of the ordinary for the site. The pedestal vase is itself not a common form, and a conch shell is an unusual discovery. The presence of exotic material (ostrich egg shell), which in view of its distant source must have been highly valued, supports the impression [...] as does the discovery of the head of gold leaf. This is an item of some value [...] Clearly it had symbolic significance.
>
> 'When we found these things, the possibility of cult assemblage certainly occurred to us. But this thought arose partly from a knowledge of contexts of terracotta figurines found elsewhere in the Mycenaean world, and of the interpretations which had been offered for them [...]
>
> 'The following year the position became clearer: a *context* was provided. With the removal of Floor 1, the platform in the north-east corner of the room became visible. This could be regarded as some kind of 'special facility', although of uncertain purpose. It became possible to think of some more active function for this small room, rather than one simply as a small store for a rather special assemblage of material. The assemblages associated with Floors 2, 4 and 5 in this room, [...] confirmed that this was indeed a rather special area [...]
>
> 'Certainly the suggestion could now reasonably be made that the stone platform served as a deliberate 'facility' for the location of these special items. Their special character and their varied nature, including objects of intrinsic worth and others where the symbolic value lies in the form rather than the material, suggested that these could conceivably have the status of offerings. It was not difficult to speculate that the platform could have served as an 'altar' and that the gold head and the Psi figurines might relate in some way to a deity or deities. The conch shell, it might be suggested, would be an appropriate part of a cult assemblage. But without reference to other parts of the Aegean, these were not more than suggestions. Clearly it was of interest that a small, separate building should contain such objects, and *no convincing alternative hypothesis to the ritual one was proposed.* But there was no clear answer.'
>
> (Renfrew 1985: 361-362; emphasis added)

> 'Ditch I was remarkable in its complexity and it was the first ditch for which it was possible to argue for a ritual interpretation. It is not at all obvious why some things seem ritual to archaeologists. The initial impression is that the term is used for the odd and the not understood. This emphasis on oddness is often the starting point too for ethnographic interest in ritual [...] Certainly ditch I was odd in various ways. At its base it contained a central ridge or mound which was an odd thing to leave in the centre of the ditch. The ridge was at a different angle to the smaller humps which were found in the base of other ditches. But oddness is clearly not an adequate basis for defining ritual. Universal definitions of ritual need to be tempered by *contextual definitions*. The latter involve contrasting different types of deposit. Ditch I seemed special in that it contained not only very complex recutting in comparison to the other ditches, but also human bones and a polished axe. This assemblage, associated with the axial mound in the ditch and thus intentionally 'placed', suggested *formalised behaviour* related to burial. *It was difficult to argue*

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[5] Here I follow the line of argument taken by Courbin (1988: 22): 'As the question here is no longer the assertion of principles but rather that of putting them into practice, we must study the practices of the New Archaeologists in their application of principles and no longer in their theoretical writings.'

that the deposits were purely the result of refuse discard from domestic or feasting activities.'

'By the end of 1987 season we felt that the [hermeneutic] circle was beginning to close in the sense that we were finding the same things over and over again. We had cracked the code, found the structure. In particular, the sequence of events in the ditches were similar - even the evidence that we had collected early on could be 'reread' to fit into the same *pattern.*'

(Hodder 1992: 222-223, 226; emphasis added)

What I have tried to show by quoting at length these two passages is that despite their apparently different theoretical agendas, Colin Renfrew and Ian Hodder are using much the same sequence of reasoning to infer ritual activity from the archaeological record. Their logical analysis is similar and the emphasis is on *archaeological context*, *pattern recognition* and *non-utilitarian function.* Even the rhetoric employed in the narrative to divulge to the reader their respective train of thought is not dissimilar: the content is that of all previous archaeology! My contention is that if other contributions by scholars who have dealt with the problem of identifying ritual activity in the archaeological evidence are studied, the emphasis would undoubtedly be the same. Take, for example, a recent preliminary report on an excavation of a Bronze Age peak sanctuary in Crete and the positive comments to it by leading scholars of Aegean archaeology (Peatfield 1991). The backbone of Peatfield's work at Atsipadhes Korakias consisted in the detailed and painstaking plotting of all figurine fragments and feature sherds discovered on site. The controlled spatial distribution of the finds allowed the excavator to offer interpretations regarding the function of the objects after the level of movement of the finds on the site were considered. From a detailed study of the *archaeological context*, Peatfield could attempt to recover the material correlates of religious practice from the *patterning in the data* he recovered from the site, and from a consideration of other contemporary sites which share similar data. Indeed for Peatfield, 'archaeology is fundamentally concerned with the recovery of patterns' (1991: 60).[6]

It seems to me that the "divide" that has been characteristic of archaeological theory in the last decade or so, especially in Britain, is bridged in a discussion of

[6] Preliminary comments on excavations of a rural Cypro-Archaic sanctuary in Cyprus, follow exactly the same logic (Smith 1997).

ritual. Indeed, the "divide" is more apparent than real and the attempt to try one, and then another alternative approach, suggesting how one view supersedes an earlier, flawed or inadequate perspective, is misplaced. Perhaps we should take heed of the criticism aired by archaeologists on the fringe of, and outside the Cambridge academic circle, that 'the debate between processualism and postprocessualism is not any more an intellectual one and is mostly a matter of academical fighting, power within academia' (Criado 1995: 227; *cf.* Shanks & Tilley 1987: 31), and that there is in fact, '[...] an integration of opinion and thinking in what is emerging as an international discipline of archaeology' (Anonymous 1995: 228). In this sense, it is not surprising to see the main contenders agreeing on certain points. Recently, Colin Renfrew (1994b: 10) has admitted that in their study of the past archaeologists choose their own data: '[...] the account which we shall give will be dependent upon our view of what is significant, or what is worth reporting or considering.' He also accepts that facts and theory are inter-related and that their 'relationship is a cyclic (but not a circular) one', while stressing that 'laying claim to objectivity in any ultimate sense' is no longer the aim of cognitive-processual archaeology. The statements and claims find resonance in Hodder's own work (see Hodder 1992), who has recently reiterated with Preucel that 'some sort of hermeneutic, inductive method is widely used in archaeology', but that 'within this framework, there is often the provisional, guarded, and bracketed use of data as if they were objective' (Hodder & Preucel 1996: 312, 671). It is hard to continue to claim objectivity for the archaeological data when, as Hodder has argued in a recent article, 'interpretation occurs at the trowel's edge' (1997: 693). Once this is accepted, making explicit our assumptions and the inferential framework to sustain our arguments becomes the effective goal in an archaeological inquiry. And here I agree with Renfrew (1994b: 10) that this is 'the crux of the matter'.

2.6 The present approach.

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, in the analysis of the data which follows in the next chapter, and as a *first* step in the present exercise, I attempt to define ritual activity on the basis of the following related points:

1. The recognition of religious ritual must be made on the basis of the ***archaeological context***. The archaeological context can be defined as the physical matrix in which artefacts interact with the natural environment, contrary to systemic context which refers to the social matrix in which artefacts function. This important distinction has been made by Michael Schiffer (1972; 1987: 3-4) in his attempt to understand the life history of artefacts, from the time of deposition to the moment they are uncovered by archaeologists. Archaeological context is related to the spatial dimension, or location, of an artefact on a site. The findspot of an artefact, its *provenience*, relates to a specific moment in its life history, before it is removed by the archaeologist. In the discussion of the sites which follows (CHAPTER III), the degree to which the provenience of artefacts can be securely pointed out is assessed. This will allow us to discern any spatial patterning in the distribution of certain classes of artefacts (e.g. inscriptions).

2. By definition ritual involves ***repeated*** action and archaeologists, therefore, look for evidence of ***redundancy***, i.e. of the repeated occurrence of specific elements in the archaeological record. It therefore follows, that the ***recognition of a pattern*** (or of patterned remains) is crucial for inferring religious ritual from material remains.

Despite problems of quantification arising from fragmentation of artefacts, frequency or the quantity of a particular type of artefact can be measured in archaeological context, and patterns of co-occurrence of a similar class of artefact within the same stratigraphic unit or deposit discerned. But as Schiffer (1987: 11, 297) has rightly pointed out, natural and cultural formation processes on a site can 'create artefact patterns unrelated to [...] past behaviour'.[7] Formation processes can

[7] In various writings Hodder (see 1992: 5) takes Schiffer to task because in his writings the latter ignored 'the issue of whether discard is meaningfully constituted'. For Hodder the way material culture is used, embellished and discarded is influenced by ideas and concepts embedded in social life. But

affect the frequency dimension of artefacts and can create clustering and associations which are susceptible to misinterpretations. This point, which has been reviewed and discussed recently (J. Hill 1995; Needham & Spence 1996, 1997), should be spelled out properly in a study of ritual because very often it is considered an essential criterion in a discussion only to be side-stepped in the eventual analysis of the data.

It will be useful, therefore, to differentiate between a *primary deposition* and a *secondary deposition* (Schiffer 1987: 58-9) in the discussion of the artefacts from the sites in CHAPTER III.[8] By primary deposition is meant artefacts deposited at their locations of use; artefacts deposited elsewhere, even if close to activity-related locations, constitute a secondary deposition.

In his work, Schiffer (1987) has put together a vast amount of information on the basis of work in ethnoarchaeology and historical archaeology that is helpful in identifying formation processes. The problem, however, lies in dealing with published data, often, as in our case, of very uneven quality where detailed information on the characteristics of the deposits that yielded the artefacts is lacking. Notwithstanding this, Schiffer has noted that recurrent activities and processes cross-cut all life histories and make it possible to generalise about patterns in archaeological context.[9] The following points will provide a useful, if simple, framework to evaluate the foundation of the conclusions reached in the site reports discussed in CHAPTER III.

a) It is very *uncommon* for large amounts of primary refuse to accumulate in activity-areas where they would eventually interfere with the performance of the activity. Intensively used activity areas - such as courtyards or temple interiors - are usually well maintained and may well be barren of all sorts of refuse (Needham & Spence 1997: 85). Having said this, very small artefacts do escape the maintenance

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while he argues that conceptual schemes 'contribute to the patterning of the material world', he admits that the patterning of material remains which is recovered by archaeologists is '*heavily transformed by survival and recovery factors*' (Hodder 1992: 19; emphasis added).

[8] Schiffer (1987) uses the terms 'primary refuse' and 'secondary refuse'. The term 'deposition' is preferred here because it lacks the utilitarian bias and connotations of the term 'refuse'. Depositing a votive object to a divinity is dictated by ideological and symbolic factors.

[9] Needham & Spence (1996, 1997) have recently emphasised that a 'rigorous study of formation processes' is imperative to understand what is 'ritual' and 'special' on a site: 'More important are insights into the frequency of certain kinds of deposits, their regularity or otherwise, the way material was treated prior to incorporation, *ultimately the balance between the commonplace and the unusual.*' (1997: 86; emphasis added)

process. This residual primary refuse can be retrieved during excavation using proper screening methods (Schiffer 1987: 357-359).

b) In secondary deposits scarcely an intact item is found. Deposits which contain complete or restorable artefacts with much or their uselife remaining are not common, and the cultural processes responsible for such patterning might well include 'ritual maintenance' of nearby religious buildings. Schiffer (1987: 65) argues that this criterion can be useful in identifying ritual dumps. He even differentiates between a ritual dump and 'a ritual cache' defining the latter as 'a reasonably discrete concentration of artifacts, *usually not found in a secondary refuse deposit* [...] generally contain[ing] complete artefacts, sometimes unused, that are intact or easily restored' (Schiffer 1987: 79; my emphasis). This would be equivalent to what Phoenician and Punic archaeologists call a *favissa* (Latin) or a *bothros* (Greek) (Gubel 1992: 169-170). After Bradley (1982; also 1990) he also refers to 'offertory or votive caches' as useful labels for defining artefacts deposited in a location during a religious ceremony, pointing out that 'the accumulation of such caches contributes to the formation of shrines' (Schiffer 1987: 80).[10]

c) When items turn up in the same archaeological context we speak of an 'association' of artefacts (Schiffer 1987: 19-21). A *singular association* refers to the discovery of two or more items in close proximity; *recurrent associations* occur when the same items recur again and again in different recovery units. Schiffer has pointed out that associations in archaeological context do not necessarily imply associations in systemic context. Artefacts which were seldom used in the same activity can end up together in a secondary deposit, or dump, and the contrary holds as well (*cf.* Schiffer 1987: 67). Conversely, however, associations arising from artefacts recovered from *primary deposits* and confined to a well defined spatial unit (e.g. a room), are strongly suggestive of artefacts being employed in the same activities. This point has to be kept in mind when discussing redundancy as evidence for ritual activity.

[10] See also Needham & Spence (1997: 82) on 'retention of special objects'.

3. **Evidence of ritual activity is reflected in remains for which it is difficult to find a utilitarian function.** The case for religious ritual is stronger if alternatives are considered and eliminated.

Scholars are agreed that this particular argument plays a crucial role in inferring religious behaviour from material remains. In her analysis of cult in prehistoric Italy, Whitehouse's list of criteria (1992: 3) for the identification of religious ritual revolves around objects and structures which 'seem to have been valued primarily not for their utilitarian but for their symbolic function'. As we have seen earlier, Renfrew (1985; 1994a: 53-54) argues that the recognition of symbols and of a symbolic system is an important step in the analysis of religion. Deities may well be represented in an abstract form or symbol and in turn, the symbols might relate iconographically to the deities worshipped and to their myths. When the myths are known, the investigation into religious ritual can be taken a long way: such is the case with the statuary recovered from some sites discussed in the next chapter, where the images carry attributes that can be associated with traditional stories of Greek gods or heroes.[11] But this can be done only with a small number of the representations, clearly those dating to the last two or three centuries BC when the Phoenicians at home and abroad were slowly absorbing aspects of the culture of their Greek neighbours. For the preceding centuries, however, we are in a "prehistoric" realm because we simply lack a corpus of Phoenician myths to provide the clues to understand the choice of specific motifs, attributes, or symbols employed in the pictorial representations. Also, the instances when objects have been inscribed by words or phrases of a votive nature following standard formularies (Amadasi Guzzo 1997) are very few, and texts which identify an image with a deity are entirely absent in the archaeological record to be discussed in the next chapter. Indeed, the identification of cult images and potential religious symbols has to be undertaken following the procedures of prehistorians.

A body of literature exists on this subject but, for the present work, it is that related to the interpretation of figurative art that is of particular relevance because three-dimensional representations have been preserved in a number of sites to be discussed shortly. When Peter Ucko's seminal work (1968) dispelled some of the

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[11] Classicists have compiled a comprehensive lexicon of the pictorial representation of subjects and symbols relating to subjects and events known in Greek and Roman mythology: *LIMC* I-VIII.

naïvety in the ideas and beliefs that saw in every anthropomorphic figurine a "Mother Goddess", he shifted the inquiry to one where figures could have multiple levels of interpretation: they *could* be deities, or votives, but *also* contractual devices or birth aids, *or* dolls and childrens' toys intended for secular play (see Ucko 1996). Following Ucko's lead which drew heavily on ethnography, others highlighted the 'palimpsest of meanings' associated with the production of figurative three-dimensional art, and the problems of matching the archaeological and ethnographic record (Talalay 1993: 37-44; Townsend 1997: 37-40). Meanwhile, for the Near East, Mervyn Fowler (1985a) noted the tenuous nature of the arguments on which interpretations regarding the religious nature of figurines had been based. But Fowler's contribution is an exception for the early historic Levant and other studies have hardly addressed the issue taking interpertations at face value (e.g. Negbi 1976). It is the unanimous view amongst archaeologists that figurines *can* be interpreted as long as interpretation is not taken to be synonymous with meaning, but that, instead, figurines are taken to constitute a powerful mode of communication (see *Viewpoint 1996*, Goodison & Morris 1998). However, the method by which this is carried out is not always clear, and approaches as to how inferences can be made from images follow a logic which is as implicit and elusive as it is subjective and diverse. Take for example a recent publication that purports to investigate the theme of the Mother Goddess and female divinities in prehistory (Goodison & Morris 1998). To the question 'how can a deity be identified?' asked by the editors in the Introduction (p. 16), no innovative methodology is provided, but a "traditional" study of the representations with an eye for detail of form and style, and above all for context. Townsend (1997) has built on such an approach by presenting a clear strategy for classification – to be followed in this work – which works for imagery without regard to period or region, taking size, and hence portability, as the defining, if not the only, criterion for studying three-dimensional imagery (**Table 2.1**). He argues that, 'the portability of a given object is a factor directly related to the way it [the object] will be employed to carry and communicate (social) non-verbal information, and hence fixes it in place within the cultural milieu in which it was used and functioned' (1997: 30). Moreover the 'formal properties' of an object, including the material used, posture,

gesture, surface treatment, and attire act as poweful media that imbue the objects with the qualities that made them "work" in antiquity (*cf.* Morphy 1989).

Label	**Capacity for mobility**	**Degree of mobility**
Figurine	held in one hand: *portable*	highly trans-contextual
Statuette	carried using two hands: *portable*	semi-trans-contextual
Statue	*not easily transportable*	context-specific

Table 2.1. Defining three-dimensional imagery.
(*source*: Townsend 1997)

Townsend's approach is not wholly a novelty to the exercise of interpreting figurines, and it is doubted whether the formal variables to which he refers have ever been forgotten by archaeologists faced with the task of excavating, handling, and describing human or animal representations from a site, and to explain why they occur where they do (see Flannery 1976a).[12] For example, Colin Renfrew's procedure (1985: 22-24) to differentiate between cult image (the deity), votary (the image of the worshipper), and votives (offerings to the deity) which uses size, frequency, location, gesture, and composite imagery, is seen to cross-cut many earlier works, even if the method is not as explicit.[13] In the context of the present work, it will suffice to mention the seminal work of William Culican on Phoenician and Punic art, a stark reminder, perhaps, that amid all the talk on innovative approaches, a study of more traditional contributions is not entirely out of place. Having said that, Townsend's attempt to be explicit and clear in the definition of commonplace words and terms, *is*

[12] For gesture as key to cultural codes, see Thomas 1991.
[13] For consideration of the importance of gesture, see as an example Langdon 1919. Then, look at how Renfrew (1985: 23) uses location to infer whether an image represents a deity: 'An image, focally placed, without rivals for attention, and accompanied by offerings which may plausibly be interpreted as dedicated to it, may well qualify as a cult image [...]'; now, compare his "Middle-Range" approach to a remark in a lecture delivered last century by William Robertson Smith (1927: 208): 'An image in like manner [i.e. with accompanying inscription] declares its own meaning better than a mere pillar, but the chief idol of a great sanctuary did not require to be explained in this way; its position showed what it was without either figure or inscription'.

indeed to be welcomed, especially since the labels are devised precisely to focus our attention the ways in which the objects could have functioned in various contexts (*cf.* Bailey 1996).

The lesson which emerges from a review of studies dealing with figurative art is the inevitability of introducing subjectivity in the interpretative process, which ultimately depends on a careful and exacting study of the objects themselves, and on the archaeological and social context of which they formed an integral part. It is also inevitable to bring together contextual evidence from various sites in order to understand the symbolic system employed.

There are a host of further questions pertinent to our study which we have not yet addressed, and which I feel should *not* be addressed at this stage of the study. Just to give an example: in the past scholars have defended the religious nature of the sites on the basis of the plan, location, and orientation of the building remains. But on their own, these criteria are useless unless such attributes are recurrent features of sites for which a religious function has already been attributed. Such recurrences can only be observed *after* the descriptions of the sites are reduced to tabular form, summarising aspects which past scholars have found intriguing and others which I assume to be important.[14] This is done in CHAPTER IV, and will be the first step in recognising patterns or the lack of them, and, I suggest, a step that allows us to circumvent the contradictions inherent in Renfrew's approach. For example, despite the fact that a 'special location' (cave, grove of trees, spring, mountain top: Renfrew 1985: 19) is considered to be essential for religious practice, a location *per se* is not a sufficient criterion to suggest the existence of a religious site: its "special" nature has to be demonstrated *not* assumed.

Related to this idea of the "special" location of a site, an important issue which will be tackled in CHAPTER IV following the description and discussion of the sites and material finds, is immediately raised, and for which some preliminary remarks are

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[14] On a discussion on the importance and relevance of 'tabulation' to seek patterns and order in the data, see I. Morris (1992).

called. An obvious problem with one of the criteria set out earlier is that in adopting a performative approach to ritual, religious sites which do *not* produce evidence of redundancy will have to be omitted. Now ethnographic studies have repeatedly shown that there exist sites which are conceived of as sacred because of their association with mythology, constellations, seasonal movements, and so on. Often, as prominent or unusual features of the natural topography such sites provide reference points for human action, attachment or deliberation. An important point which stems from these studies and which is of particular relevance here, is that in many cases no material offerings are made at the sites. Chapter after chapter of a conference proceedings intended to address the theme 'Sacred sites/sacred places' (Carmichael *et al.* 1994), showed in the words of the organiser (Ucko 1994: xix) that, 'many of the sites and areas regarded as significant by living people are not marked by any human construction or other human activity which would be recognized through archaeological investigation.' Archaeologists, especially British prehistorians, drawing upon the concerns and insights raised in the ethnographic literature, and some would say even from Classical archaeology (Whitley 1996: 316), have been developing approaches to identify these sacred sites in nature (Tilley 1994; Bradley 1991). Archaeologists are now studying places rather than monuments, and places *as* monuments, and they have been advocating an approach to landscape invested with symbolic meanings, embedded in memory and action, especially movement and perception (Bender 1993; Bradley 1996).

As for our study, a case for sacred sites in nature can only be made *after* the sites have been examined, and this has to await the discussion in CHAPTER IV where a proper discussion of the brief, though necessary, comments raised here will be addressed.

In concluding this chapter, in view of what has been discussed thus far, it is worth listing the questions for which we shall seek information from the archaeological record discussed in the following chapter.

1) Are particular places in the landscape chosen for the religious sites?[15]
2) Do the religious sites follow the same plan?
3) Do they have the same orientation?
4) Are architectural features recurrent in the religious sites?
5) Have particular classes of finds been recovered from the religious sites?

We cannot discuss the place of religion and ritual in the general context of Phoenician and Punic society in the first millennium BC, before we can gauge the nature, extent and quality of our evidence within the inferential framework and assumptions set out earlier, and answer the questions set out above. It is to this task that we now turn.

Note: Due to a printing error numbers 43 to 46 have been skipped in the pagination. NO part of the text is missing; page 47 follows page 42.

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[15] As pointed out in a footnote for **Table 1.1**, the designation of the sites as 'religious' is at this stage following convention, and that their religious status remains to be established.

PAGE NUMBERING AS ORIGINAL

CHAPTER III

The Sites

'Anything is evidence which is used as evidence, and no one can know what is going to be useful as evidence until he has had occasion to use it.'

– R. G. COLLINGWOOD (1947: 280)

'Much of the archaeologist's energy goes into interpreting the silences and contradictions of site reports, a complex genre which has to be read as closely as any ancient text.'

– I. MORRIS (1992: 174)

3.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the archaeological data for the sites. The criteria that each site had to fulfill to be included in this chapter follow:

1. That a site has been termed in the primary sources – notes (*notizie*), preliminary, or final reports – as 'Phoenician' and/or 'Punic';

2. That the site has been interpreted as the focus of religious activities in the literature, whether the present study agrees with such a designation or not;

3. That the deposits uncovered are related to *considerable* structural evidence, and that, therefore, statuary, inscriptions, and so forth, form part of a known spatial context.

The sites are grouped according to the country where they are located, moving from the Eastern Mediterranean westwards. These are: Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Greece, the Maltese Islands, Italy and its islands (Sicily, Sardinia), Spain and the Balearics, and Tunisia.

Before proceeding, a few words ought to be spent explaining the method I have followed in discussing the sites, and specifically why I did *not* choose to list the data against prompts as is usually the case in site catalogues. The reason is rather straightforward: I hope to have made clear in the preceding chapter that the identification of a religious site or building depends on a logical process wherein there is a double movement from data to interpretation and back again, where an argument is cumulative, and above all, where subjectivity is inevitable. My contention is that an entry in a catalogue would have robbed the interpretative process of its full meaning: it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for the reader to see why I have reached a particular conclusion and by which process of argument this was done. An emphasis on narrative (Hodder 1989) which I have instead followed helps to contextualise my critiques and presents in a clear way the complex and laborious chain of inferences upon which much of the interpretation rests. Where I have kept the "I" in the text it has been done to emphasize the subjective element in the interpretation. The narrative is divided into two: the descriptive part gives a summary of what is known about the site and presents the criteria by which the excavator/s claimed that the remains were of a religious nature; the discursive part is intended as a review that outlines the aspects which I assume to be important and positive in the context of the criteria discussed in CHAPTER II, but also, when they exist, the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the interpretations offered. For some sites, where the data are wanting, or when the dead ends are obvious, the two parts are merged. Another point ought to be made: since this chapter considers the sites *in complete isolation*, where no parallels are cited, the minimalist stand adopted might appear a shade ridiculous. Frustrating as this approach is, I do it with a purpose, as a means to an end, conscious of the fact that circular arguments afflict the literature, and that it is essential to hack a clear path through a mass of confused writing. The constant, pedantic referencing will help to highlight this point and to show that to

make an account possible, however brief, it has been necessary to consult countless papers and articles in an attempt to try and link the data presented in one place to ideas and theories lurking in another. Let it be made clear, however, that my critiques are *not* intended to diminish the importance of a century of archaeological work in different parts of the Mediterranean in one broad sweep. I hold no contempt whatsoever for the people who have painstakingly excavated the sites and who have brought to the attention of an academic public the results of years of research. But for the present work to be of value, mistakes and *non sequitur*s of which, alas!, there are many, have to be pointed out. The opportunity will arise again later (CHAPTER IV) to acknowledge the outstanding contributions, to develop the early initiatives, and to draw attention to ways in which past approaches can be extended or adapted to different perspectives.

For each entry, 'Site visit' refers to the date on which an inspection of the site was made in person to locate the remains and to compare what is visible with the published accounts. During site visits I was usually accompanied by friends and colleagues, mostly locals, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude for showing me round and for discussing the sites and materials. 'Reported' refers to published primary sources, usually preliminary notes and articles, from a few pages in length to comprehensive and exhaustive monographs. 'Published' refers to the final statement of an exacavation and/or a synthesis of it. Reference to secondary sources that add to this information is only made in the text when appropriate. The name of the site is given as published in the first reports, unless otherwise stated. This is usually followed by the name of the locality or the village in whose lands the site was found.

The 'Egyptianising cavetto cornice' to which I make repeated reference is a characteristic Egyptian roll-and-hollow moulding (Wagner 1980; Lézine 1960: chapter 12) (e.g. **FIGURE 18b**): the hollow is the 'cavetto' which has an overhanging curvature of a quarter of a circle; this term will be considered here as an equivalent to the German *ägyptischen Hohlkehle*, the Italian *cornice a gola egizia*, and the French *corniche à gorge égyptienne*.

For each site the following information has been sought:

1. the name of the site and its location;
2. any early accounts or reports about the site;
3. the excavators of the site and when they were active on the site;
4. the method and quality of the excavation;
5. the published reports (notes, preliminary and final);
6. the excavation unit of artefacts, especially of inscriptions and mobiliary art, and its nature (primary or secondary);
7. the archaeological features associated with the artefacts;
8. the range of dates put forward for the site in general and/or for particular excavation units.

The illustrations included in VOLUME II are meant to be an integral part of the account which follows.

3.1.1 Aïn el-Hayât, Amrith

Site visit: Site no longer exists

Reported: —

Published: Renan 1864: 68-70, plate 9

Description and Discussion. During his survey of remains at Amrith, Renan reported the discovery of what he called two tabernacles swamped in oleander bushes in a marshy area fed from a spring known as *Aïn el-Hayât* (the Spring of the Serpents), about 600 m. SE of the *Ma'abed* (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 3, fig 1).[1] The spring was still being used until recently (Dunand, Saliby & Khirichian 1954-1955: 190). Placed ten metres apart, the two tabernacles or aedicules faced each other on an E-W orientation. The better conserved of the two structures was surveyed by Renan who dated it to the Hellenistic period and his architect restored it (Renan 1864: 68-70, plate 9 (general view and plan); Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 246-247; Wagner 1980: 8-9) (**FIGURES 2a, 3**).

This consisted of a 'small monolithic chapel', placed on a cubic block of stone of side 3 m. The block was placed on a smaller plinth or base of stone. On the cubic base traces of stairs were noted on one side, but their reconstruction has been called into question by Wagner (1980: 9).[2] The aedicule was about 5.50 m. high, and its front was crowned by an *uraeus* frieze resting above an Egyptianising cavetto cornice.[3] On the cornice, two wings on either side of a globe were sculpted in relief above a vulture with outstretched wings. Wagner sees an Achaemenid prototype for this winged sun disk, suggesting a date between 539-500 BC for the construction of this monument (1980: 9, n. 3).

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[1] Dunand & Saliby (1985: 47) give the location of Aïn el-Hayât as '50 m. S.-E. du *Ma'abed*'. This is clearly a misprint and is given correctly as 600 m. on p. 36. The location is shown on the scaled plan given in Saliby 1971: fig 1 where the spring is clearly more than 50 m. away from the *Ma'abed* at Amrith. See also Wagner 1980: 8.

[2] Lézine (1960: 21) recalls these steps to propose a similar set-up for the *Ma'abed.*

[3] Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 246-247) do not give all the dimensions. These have been read off the plan reproduced from Renan's survey (fig. 189), and are therefore given as reconstructed in **Table 4.2.** The naos would have measured approximately 1 x 1.5 m., while the cube, approximately 1.5 x 3 m.

Ten metres to the E of the first structure the remains of another were located, but not enough survived to attempt a reconstruction in elevation. Notwithstanding, Renan and others were of the opinion that the two structures were part of the same religious complex: 'certainement ils formaient un ensemble; l'un d'eux était consacré peut-êtrè à un dieu, et l'autre à la déesse sa compagne.' (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 247)

The religious nature of the remains has been accepted by some scholars (e.g. Pietchmann 1899: 251; Rey-Coquais 1974: 213, 253; Cecchini 1992), and in some cases Aïn el-Hayât has been used to justify the religious nature of Phoenician and Punic sites elsewhere (specifically at Nora: **3.8.8**). The monuments, however, are generally omitted from the literature, perhaps because they are no longer visible (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 2).[4] The monuments at Aïn el-Hayât do not provide the information outlined CHAPTER II. The only elements for which a symbolic significance can be argued here are the frieze of serpents (which give the name to the spring) and for which Dunand sees connotations of healing and rebirth (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 47), and the winged disc on the cornice. But this observation arises more out of a knowledge of the adoption of similar iconography in Persian, Egyptian and Phoenician contexts elsewhere. Despite the fact that there is no apparent utilitarian function for these structures, and that no convincing alternative hypothesis to the religious one put forward by Renan can be thought of, without reference to other sites we have no clear answer.

3.1.2 *Ma'abed*, Amrith

Site visit: 11 August 1995

Reported: Renan 1864: 62-68, plates 8, 10

Published: Dunand & Saliby 1985

Description. Amrith (the Hellenistic Marathos) is situated on the Syrian coast, 5 km. SE of Tartous and 300 m. E of the Tripoli-Tartous road. The island of Rouad (the Phoenician Aradus or Arwad) lies opposite, 2 km. away from the shore (**FIGURE 7**). The area is rich in archaeological remains which are still preserved above ground (see Rey-Coquais 1974: 212-214). A number of travellers had been attracted to the site during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, amongst them H. Maundrell and Richard Pococke who both suggested that Amrith was the site of an 'open temple' (see Dunand & Saliby 1985: 1, 4 n. 3). Renan visited Amrith in 1861 and made a survey of the visible remains, including the *Ma'abed* (1864: 62-68, plates 8, 10), an Egyptian-style *naos* or shrine built on a rock-cut cuboid platform in the middle of a rectangular rock-cut basin (**FIGURES 2, 4**). His new plan superseded an earlier one by Pococke (1745; reproduced in Dunand & Saliby 1985: 30, fig 16). He even carried out some excavation and retrieved numerous fragments of statues (Renan 1864: 851). His work placed Amrith on the archaeological map of the Levant, and the remains were constantly mentioned in standard works dealing with the ancient Orient in general, and the Phoenicians in particular (e.g. Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 242-246, figs. 185-187; Pietchmann 1899: 250-251; Rawlinson 1889). In January 1926, Maurice Dunand, Antiquities Inspector for the French High Commission in Syria and Lebanon, uncovered a large number of statues in what he claimed was a *favissa*, 100 m. west of the *Ma'abed*, which he dated to the sixth century BC (Dunand 1944-1945, 1946-1948; Dunand & Saliby 1985: 4, fig 2). Between 1935 and 1957 Dunand excavated at the mound of Amrith uncovering Persian levels (reported in Dunand, Saliby & Khirichian 1954-1955), carried out a study of the fifth-century BC monumental tombs, and cleared parts of the third-century BC stadium. In 1957, together with Nessib Saliby,

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[4] Dunand recalls seeing one of the *naiskoi* in 1926 after which only the basin was visible (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 47). Wagner (1980: 8) points out that Renan makes no reference to an enclosure in his survey, and that an enclosure or basin would have been useless given the nature of the site.

Dunand started clearing the basin of the *Ma'abed*, prepared a detailed plan of all the architectural fragments uncovered, and restored the *naos* and parts of the S portico (Saliby 1971). A comprehensive synthesis of their campaign which lasted till 1974 has been published (Dunand & Saliby 1985).[5]

Clearance of the basin (measuring 46.70 m. long by 38.50 m. wide, excluding quays;[6] depth varied between 3 - 3.50 m., volume of rock excavated is about 8000 m.^{3}) revealed a large number of architectural blocks clustered in heaps along the length of rock-cut quays which skirted the basin on its W, S and E sides (**FIGURE 5**). According to Dunand and Saliby the layout of the blocks is suggestive of a collapse by natural causes, probably due to erosion of the rock quays and possibly by seismic activity (1985: 21, 27). The blocks included 3 m. long pillars and architraves, merlons and gargoyles representing lions. A study of the collapse allowed Dunand and Saliby to reconstruct (on paper) the monument in elevation to include a portico of rectangular pillars surrounding the basin on three sides (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 11, 20-31). The walls seem to have been crested by a frieze of dentils and merlons (or crowsteps). The fourth side, the north face, was open to the nearby river (the Nahr Amrith) between two angle towers. Two small crenellated *naiskoi* were reconstructed above a rock-cut ledge on the north side. The spring which filled the basin flows underground to the east for most of the year, even in the peak of summer. A canal cut in the northern quay permitted the dispersal of water from the basin (**FIGURE 6**).

In the middle of the basin stood the *naos*. Built of large ashlar blocks, the naos consists of a little room or space open on the north side, built on top of a rock-cut platform or podium of side 5 m. and 5.50 m. high. The entire height of the monument

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[5] Grainger (1991: 17 n. 46) makes reference to 'the final excavation report, published Paris, 1988' which he was not able to see. No such report appears to have been published in that year (Dunand died in 1987) and Grainger is probably referring to Dunand & Saliby's synthesis (1985) which does not appear in any of his notes.

[6] These are the measurements given by Dunand & Saliby (1985: 14, 26). The dimensions of the basin *including* the quays are given in Wagner (1980): width at N end is 49.50 m., at S end is 48.55 m.; length at E end is 55.72 m., at W end is 56.33 m. The average of these measurements is adopted in **Table 4.2**, and the surface area of the complex would be 2747.2 m.^{2}. The area reported by Dunand (1968: 44) as 8710 m.^{2} must be wrong. Different measurements have been reported by Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 103) (55 by 48 m.; repeated in Saliby 1971), Wright (1985: 97-98) (57 by 50 m.), and Leriche & Lipinski (1992: 27; also Lipinski 1995: 428) come closest by giving the dimensions as 47 by 39 m. None of the authors cite the source for their measurements.

would have been about 9.5 m., so that the *naos* itself was about 6.5 m. above the level of the water. It measured 3.5 m. wide by 3.8 m. deep externally, and 2.20 m. by 2.75m internally.[7] The scatter of blocks immediately below the *naos* allowed Dunand and Saliby to carry out anastylosis on the monument to include an Egyptian gorge cornice above the rock-cut podium and one at the level of the roof. Both cornices were surmounted by merlons. The interior of the *naos* seems to have been plastered white. Dunand and Saliby refused to suggest what divine image or symbol could have been placed inside the *naos* (1985: 31-36, 45). Recent studies have accepted the architectural reconstruction proposed by Dunand and Saliby (e.g. *DCPP* fig. 280; Bonnet 1988: fig. 4; Wagner 1980: 2-8, plate 15, 1).[8] Lézine (1960: 19-24, figs 10-11), however, has gone further to suggest that the *naos* which included two columns or pillars in its facade, housed a tri-pillar shrine flanked by incense-burners, reached by a staircase attached to the rock-cut platform.[9]

A part of Dunand and Saliby's report (1985: 38-43) was devoted to the nature of the cult associated with the temple at the *Ma'abed*, for which they note, that no textual references exist (1985: 7, 53) They argued that the focus of the cult were the 'sacred waters' (*eaux saintes*), the natural spring that flowed in the area, the only source of water to be found within a radius of 5 km. (1985: 47). For Dunand and Saliby the spring in itself must have been a place of worship well before the

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[7] The dimensions given here have been read off the elevation provided by Dunand & Saliby (1985: 32 fig. 17; the dimensions are not given in their text). The external dimensions given here match those cited by Leriche & Lipinski 1992: 27. Wagner (1980: 6) gives the external depth of the *naos* as 4.20 m. which is wrong. The height of the monument given in Renan (7 m.) is at least two metres too short which seems to imply that as much as that of the rock-cut cube was covered when he surveyed the remains (**FIGURE 4a**).

[8] Dunand & Saliby do not include the two pillars, tapering upwards and crowned by a double Egyptian gorge capital (overall height 2.95 m.) discovered in the basin in their reconstruction (1985: 16, fig. 4), despite saying that, 'c'étaient des fûts très vénérés', recalling the twin pillars in front of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. Bonnet (1988: 117) claims that such a set-up must have existed at Amrith. A similar double Egyptian gorge capital has been excavated in a secondary context at Tas-Silg in Malta which Ciasca suggests formed part of a pair which crowned two pillars placed beyond the entrance to the Phoenician temple there (Ciasca 1976-1977: 170, 168 fig. 1).

[9] It is odd that Dunand and Saliby (1985) failed to take into consideration Lézine's earlier publication (1960). Lézine found support for his reconstruction in the strong resemblance between the front elevation of the *naos* and the votive stelae from Sardinian and North African tophets. Wagner (1980: 6 n. 7) argues against this reconstruction. Lézine's reconstruction of a staircase leading up to the tripillar shrine makes no sense given the fact that the *naos* was surrounded by water; although, one should keep in mind that Lézine was writing well before the synthesis was published. What is possible, on the other hand, is Lézine's placement of two columns or pillars on the facade (Wagner 1980: 8, n. 8) recalling a

Phoenicians, under Persian rule (539-332 BC), decided to monumentalise this religious site (1985: 12, 31, 34, 49). They argue that the ritual must have involved the seasonal gathering of worshippers along the porticos who would come to draw water using small vases found lying in large numbers along the north quay of the basin (1985: 11). Dunand and Saliby also argue that the group of statue fragments discovered near the temple constituted its *favissa*. From a study of the 456 pieces they concluded that the deity venerated here was Melqart-Heracles (**PLATE 1d**). He is represented standing, valorous, the left foot placed slightly forward, the right arm lifted and the other bent at the elbow and clasped against the body. He is dressed in a knee-length tunic, the torso covered by a corset held by a belt. The head and shoulders are covered by a lion skin, the iconography of the god. Beneath the left arm the figure clasps or braises a lion cub. The right hand would have held a club (Bonnet 1988: 118 note 14). Twenty-one such representations have been recovered (1985: 40, 42). The theophoric element Melqart was even identified in a name (*Bdmlqrt*) in an inscription recovered in two pieces from the canal for water overflow in the basin (1985: 38; Bordreuil 1985: 221-225, figs 1-2). Its letter forms date it to the sixth century BC (Puech 1986: 327-331). The excavators suggest that a secondary deity was even worshipped at the *Ma'abed*, retracting from an earlier pronouncement to the contrary made by one of them (Saliby 1971: 287): the young healer god Eshmun, to be identified in a statue with a juvenile head (1985: 42l; also Bordreuil 1985: 228-230). Moreover, the name of the deity was read from an inscribed fragment of a statue recovered from the *favissa* (1985: 46-47; Bordreuil 1985: 225-228, figs 3-6), dated by the forms of the letters to the fifth century BC (Puech 1986: 332-335).[10] Dunand and Saliby even identified a number of statues with the male worshippers (votaries), dressed in a tunic, presenting their offerings: goats (**PLATE 1c**), birds, a vase, a flower, a palmette, fruit. They noted that the size of the statues changed according to the representation: half life-size for Melqart-Heracles (about 0.80 m. high), the others at a third or a quarter life-size. Dunand dated the statuary to the Persian period spanning the sixth-fourth centuries BC (1985: 13, 45). He suggests that towards the mid-fourth

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somewhat similar architectural layout depicted on a relief from Assyrian Khorsabad (reproduced in Perrot & Chipiez 1884: 142, fig. 41).

century, the statuary was removed from the temple by the worshippers and buried nearby. This marked the end of the religious use of the monument, but water was still being collected from the basin in the third and second centuries BC, as suggested by the retrieval of pottery dating to this time.

Discussion. The work undertaken by Dunand and Saliby at Amrith is commendable in the context of other known Phoenician and Punic sites in the Mediterranean. However, it is necessary to establish that both scholars were justified in describing the complex as a religious site in the light of what was discussed in CHAPTER II. Some points need to be spelled out:

1. The excavations conducted within the basin were not stratigraphic. We are told that the excavators cleared the basin in 20 cm. levels (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 10). Nothwithstanding this, we can understand the formation process of the material uncovered from the pattern of distribution of the blocks. As argued by the archaeologists, we are dealing with a collapse of material from the quays, and we can therefore conclude that we are dealing with a primary context. There is no reason to disagree with the anastylosis carried out on paper, at least in outline. But on architectural grounds alone, and *if the site is taken in isolation*, it is difficult to present a clear case for the *Ma'abed* as a place where religious ritual took place. Whether certain architectural elements were preferred in Phoenician and Punic religious architecture still has to be established. The evidence which could be suggestive of expressive action associated with a divinity consists of the inscription, of a votive character, retreived from the overflow canal, and the three fragments of statuettes recovered from the basin. But these have to be seen in the context of similar finds made in the *favissa*.

2. We do not have the details of the excavation or clearance of the *favissa* that would allow us clues to understand the formation processes of this rich and

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[10] The translation of line 2 of the inscription given in Puech (1986: 335) is incorrect. Following the latin transliteration provided, it should read simply 'to Eshmun' (the deity: *l'šmn*) and not 'Abdeshmun' (*'abdšmn* which would be a name carrying the theophoric component).

impressive assemblage. We do know, however, that most of the material was found in fragments, and Dunand and Saliby even suggest that breakage was undertaken by the worshippers themselves, before hiding or desposing of the statuary, assuming therefore that the *favissa* is connected to the *Ma'abed* (1985: 38). It is reasonable to suggest that we are dealing with a secondary context here and that we have evidence of redundancy. But we still have to establish that this is a special assemblage of statuary, the result of religious action, and that the term "*favissa*" (a ritual cache) really applies to it. What can be shown is that one of the statuettes was a religious offering to the god Eshmun: a statement that describes that act was inscribed on it. But this is only one case from a whole repertoire and since this deposit appears to be of a secondary nature, it is difficult to ascertain whether the rest of the statuary served the same purpose. Also, there is Dunand and Saliby's assurance that some statues represent the god Melqart-Heracles, a point that has found acceptance in the literature (Bonnet 1988: 118; Jourdain-Annequin 1993). But it is important to point out that this identification arises from a knowledge of the iconography of the god adopted elsewhere.

The discussion thus far has shown that while this site at Amrith does give plausible suggestions of religious ritual, they are not conclusive in themselves if a highly sceptical position is adopted and the site is taken in complete isolation. The presentation of a stronger case will have to wait until reference is made to other sites in the Near East.

3.1.3 Sukas

Between 1958 and 1963 the Danish Carlsberg Expedition to Phoenicia carried out archaeological excavations at Sukas on the Syrian coast with the aim of investigating Greek and Oriental relations during the period 1200-500 BC and to establish a safer chronology for Iron Age culture in Phoenicia for the same period (Riis 1970). Current and preliminary reports were published in the *Annales Archeologiques Arabes Syriennes* and the final reports include seven volumes. Sukas is situated on the Syrian coast, 26 km. south of Latakia and 6 km. south of Gabla, bordered to the north, the east and the south with one of the most fertile plains of the northern Levant. On either side of the artificial mound of Tell[1] Sukas is a small bay or natural harbour (**FIGURE 7**).

3.1.3.1 Tell Sukas

Site visit: —

Reported: —

Published: Riis 1970

Description. Stratigraphic excavations at Tell Sukas uncovered remains pertaining to thirteen periods (A to N). In the north-eastern sector (squares G-H 13-16) the archaeologists reported the discovery of an isolated rectangular building dating to a First Greek Building Phase (Period G[3]). The building was oriented east-south-east/west-north-west and measured 7.20-35 m. in length (**FIGURE 8a**). Its width was 4.32 m. at the east end and 3.80 m. at the west end. The preserved walls were low and appear to have been the foundations of a superstructure of mud-brick. In the western third of the room, a large irregular limestone slab was uncovered resting on the floor. It was about 1.20 m. long, about 0.95 m. wide, and about 0.17 m. thick, and was pierced by two artificial holes. In G 16, remains of a large rectangular structure

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[1] The spelling used in the Sukas excavation volumes is *tall* instead of tell, which is an artifial mound. The latter is, however, preferred here following common usage.

which must have measured about 7.35 m. long and 4.40 m. wide were also uncovered. Riis noted that the disposition and orientation of these two rectangular structures at Sukas recalls the architectural scheme of the normal Greek sanctuary with accompanying altar:[2] 'altogether , the plan of the rectangular building, the tile finds, the Greek pottery and the animal bones found between the two structures lead to the conclusion that we have in actual fact to do with the remains of a Greek sanctuary consisting of a small temple, originally with a primitve cult image supported by the stone slab in the western part of the interior, a massive altar of nearly the same size as the temple, and an enclosure wall with at least one gate.' (Riis 1970: 56)

In squares H 15 and H 16 the excavators also uncovered the remains of an isolated small rectangular platform measuring about 3.70 m. by 7.00 m. with its short ends facing the north-east and the south-west. On the platform was a pavement of cobbles preserved only in a small area. At the north-eastern end, a circular pit lined with stones (inner diameter 1.0 m.) was found. The south-east side of the platform was protected by two oblique stone walls forming a right angle. The shorter wall appears to have marked the beginning of a ramp or low step leading up to the platform. West of the platform ash and charcoal was noticed together with numerous animal bones. Riis concluded that 'the pit had something to do with sacrifices ...' and that 'the platform containing it would then have functioned as a bama, the cultic [Phoenician] High Place in the old Semitic religions' (Riis 1970: 41).

Riis dated the Greek sanctuary complex to the seventh century BC. A second Greek Building Phase followed (Period G^2) and the sanctuary underwent alterations (Riis 1970: 62-70) (**FIGURE 8b**). The temple was enlarged, the Greek altar needed little repair while the old Phoenician High Place was completely reshaped and the old circular pit filled up and covered. The temple now measured 9.90 m. in length. Its width was 4.95 m. at the west end and 5.30 m. at the east end. Two traversal walls were added to the rectangular plan of the building dividing the space into three rooms. In the western room a perforated stone inserted in a funnel-shaped pit was found. The

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[2] 'Both temple and altar were mostly rectangular structures in axial interrelation, but with their own longitudinal axes at right angles to one another' (Riis 1970: 54).

pit contained white ashes and bones. In Riis's opinion the hole was meant to hold some wooden object which was burnt at the final destruction of the temple. A broad flint knife was found adjacent to the stone, probably 'a sacrificial instrument employed in the Greek period by the cult personnel of the temple' (Riis 1970: 64). The middle room included a circular construction in its northern half, made of irregular stones with a central cavity ending in the re-used lower part of a pointed storage jar of Iron Age type. Riis suggested that the 'most reasonable explanation of this structure is that it was a libation altar' (1970: 65). The east room was cobbled. Riis made a tentative reconstruction of the tripartite temple which included a deep *pronaos* with one column in the middle and a round libation altar in the inner corner and a *cella* with a broad rectangular foundation for a presumably wooden cult image. The whole building appears to have been roofed with tiles of the Corinthian type (Riis 1970: 70). The erection of the new temple was put by the excavators to a date within the period 600-550 BC on the basis of the pottery and other finds. It seems to have been destroyed around 553/2 BC (Riis 1970: 86-87). As to the deities worshipped within the temenos of the Greek sanctuary and on the Phoenician High Place, Riis lamented that the evidence was not clear. However, it was apparent that libations were offered on the circular altar in the *pronaos* and animals sacrificed on the altar east of the temple and on the platform of the High Place (Riis 1970: 84-85).

Remains for a third Greek Building Phase (Period G^1) were very scanty, suggesting a period of decline and even decay (**FIGURE 9a**). The High Place in G-H 15-16 was maintained and the rectangular Greek altar was only concealed by clayey debris suggestive of a superstructure of sundried bricks. A poor substitute to the temple which made use of the two eastern foundation walls was uncovered. The isolated structure measured 3.30 m. wide and at least 4.20 m. long. The zoological finds of the area (G-H 15-16) were similar to those of the preceeding two phases suggesting to the director a continuation of the cult (Riis 1970: 90).

A completely different town plan and architectural types and building techniques heralded the beginning of two new periods at Tell Sukas: Period F (the Neo-Phoenician Building Phase) and Period E (the Late Hellenistic Building Phase)

(**FIGURE 9b**). The western buildings in the excavated area (G-J 13) served a utilitarian function associated with oil and wine production. The structures in the eastern squares (G-J 14-16) appear to have served a religious purpose, as is suggested by the retireval of only one object 'of such particular nature, value, and rarity as to imply a ritual function or a special dedication' (Riis 1970: 122). This was a Greek bronze foot with the Silenus figure, part of a brazier or a basin, retrieved from a distrubed part of the pavement (1970: fig. 41a). A rectangular room measuring about 8.50 m. in length and about 4.80 m. wide was uncovered in G-H 15-16. The room was paved with large irregular stones. The longitudinal axis which went north-west/south-east was marked by three pavement stones of extra-ordinary size which went deeper into the underlying earth. They are thought to have served as bases of vertical wooden supports of a roofing for which, however, no trace exists (Riis 1970: 92). Riis suggested that the nearest parallel to this room are sanctuaries of the type common in Palestine, citing the First Fosse Temple of the Late Bronze Age at Tell Duwair (Lachish) as an example. But to Riis, the layout even recalled certain Cypriot sanctuaries with one or more naiskoi behind a courtyard. The architectural complex remained unchanged during the F- and E-Periods (Riis 1970: 121-2).

Discussion. The excavations at Tell Sukas were conducted according to the principles of stratigraphic excavation. Riis points out (1970: 17), however, that 'the conditions for obtaining a very detailed stratigraphy immeditaely under the surface were rather bad'. Notwithstanding, an attempt was made to 'present stratigraphy correct in all essentials' where 'the ceramic fragments, pebbles, ashes, bits of charcoals, etc., contained in the individual strata provided a clear impression of the latter' (Riis 1970: 19). As for the dating, the excavators refused to accept a date on the basis of statistics of potsherds for the simple reason that rebuilding activities disturbed much of the stratigraphy, and a tentative chronology was proposed (**Table 3.1**) Instead, dating was given according to the latest objects in each definite context. Moreover, a rigorous recording system was kept: '[...] much attention was attached to defining [...] objects to have them immediately fixed with exactitude in the three-dimensional system of measurement.' (Riis 1970: 19).

Strata	*Cultural Periods*		*Probable Dates*
H^2	Phoenician Iron Age I		about 1170 - about 850 BC
H^1	Phoenician Iron Age II = Greek Settlement Period		850 - 675 BC
G^3	}	{Phase I	675 - 588 BC
G^2	}Period of Greek Domination	{Phase II	588 - 552 BC
G^1	}	{Phase III	552 - 498 BC
		Hiatus	
F	Neo-Phoenician = Late Classical/Early Hellenistic		about 380 - about 140 BC
E^2	Late Hellenistic I		140 - 117 BC
E^1	Late Hellenistic II		117 - 69 BC
		Hiatus	
D	Late Roman		3rd-4th century AD

Table 3.1 Proposed chronology for Tell Sukas.

(*source*: Riis 1970: 127)

Defending the religious nature of the buildings uncovered at Tell Sukas is not easy. For the Period G^3, nothing was found inside the building in G14-15 to suggest redundancy. Outside the building, the recovery of bones of ox and sheep, only, according to the excavator (Riis 1970: 46) 'from heads and extremities' (i.e. not meat-bearing parts), would suggest that we are dealing with a context which is not domestic. But this is hardly sufficient evidence and the case is a weak one, despite the insistence of the excavator to see a temple with accompanying altar of Hellenic origins and a Phoenician-style high place during this period. Notwithstanding, Riis' conclusions have been accepted in the general literature. Bonnet (1995: 660), for instance, talks of 'une véritable communauté grecque' at Tell Sukas and accepts Hellenic parallels for the temple. This is, however, refused by Brody (1996: 88-92) who, recalling the work of John Boardman (1990), notes that Tell Sukas was essentially composed of Greeks settling amongst Phoenicians and that an 'identical' parallel to the building in G14-15 could be found at the "Tinnit/'Aštart" temple at Sarepta. The debate about the presumed "Greekness" of Tell Sukas has been the subject of prolonged debate, and is an issue to which we shall return. However, some opinions should be listed here.

While some authors (e.g. Salles 1995: 568) find it difficult to decide whether the "Phoenician" material at Tell Sukas was imported or is a reflection of a Phoenician identity for the site, others, like Grainger (1991: 13 n. 28) and Elayi (1982: 105), argue that the local pottery at Sukas was by definition Phoenician because Sukas was part of the Aradian *peraia*. Grainger, moreover, noted that although the Phoenician pottery at Sukas is less distinctive, P. J. Riis recognized it at Sukas, quoting pp. 114-118 of Riis' publication. But this is untrue because Riis makes only *one* explicit reference to Phoenician pottery in these pages (p. 114), and this with reference to only one class of vessels: pointed amphorae. On the other end of the debate are others, like Corbett (1983: 35): not happy with the conclusions reached by Riis regarding the presumed Greekness of Sukas he noted that that 'expected mass of Greek pottery fragments (approx. 3000 sherds)' lifted from the site are 'not necessarily evidence of extensive settlement, much less of trade in pottery', and that 'the evidence for identifying the temple as Greek seems most uncertain'.

Aaron Brody took the evidence further to defend the Phoenician identity of the site. In his analysis of Canaanite and Phoenician coastal temples and shrines, Brody (1996) noted that the pierced stone fragment found in the innermost room within the building was part of an anchor stock, of the type that occur in some Canaanite and Phoenician temples. The identification of an anchor stock had been suggested with due caution by Buhl (1983: 105-106, No. 683, plate 31.683), but taken as established by Brody. However, even if the stone was part of an anchor stock, which is difficult to tell given the fragmentary nature of the specimen, the context in which the whole fragment was found – set in a small funnel-shaped pit surrounded by stones (Riis 1970: 64; not commented upon by Brody) – suggests a secondary use for this pierced stone, probably as a base for an upright fixed in the hole. The conclusion is that the stone cannot be used to defend the nature of the remains for this period.

Given the absence of statuary and moveable objects from the alleged religious complex, the case for them being so rests entirely upon their plan, something to which we shall return in the next chapter.

3.1.3.2 Mina Sukas (Sukas Harbour or South Harbour)

Site visit: —

Reported: —

Published: Riis 1979

Description. In 1960, excavations under the supervision of the expedition director P. J. Riis, were conducted at Mina Sukas, the area south of the southern bays framing Sukas (**FIGURE 7**). In this sector named Sukas Harbour or South Harbour, in squares D-J 7, the excavators reported the discovery of a sanctuary existing from the later sixth to the first century BC (Periods G^1- F - E) and showing three phases (**FIGURE 10**). The remains were found in sand overlying a Graeco-Phoenician cemetery of Period G (**FIGURE 11**). A report of the excavation has been published (Riis 1979).

The complex consists of a rectangular structure (G/H 7) orientated east-west and measuring 3.50 m. by 2.60 m. The longitudinal walls were about 0.45-0.50 m. thick, the transversal ones about 0.60 m. They were built of roughly rectangular blocks interspersed with more irregular, smaller stones. The walls uncovered probably had the upper parts built of sun-dried bricks. Two floor levels were recorded (I and II) within the rectangular space. The structure which the excavators think might have been a kind of *naiskos* or chapel (Riis 1979: 38), was either surrounded by a covered corridor or placed in an open courtyard, enclosed by walls to the north, west and south.

North of the Chapel Court (in G 7) there was a smaller enclosure containing three structures which Riis interpreted as altars. The southern wall of the enclosure was about 0.90 m. wide and preserved for a length of 3 m., while the opposite northern one was slightly narrower, about 0.80 m. wide. The enclosure therefore had an inner width of 2.50 m. and an outer one of 4.20 m. The structure seems to have been crowned by a range of limestone merlons or crowsteps. Two were discovered

beyond the west wall lying on top of scattered stones and pottery of the fourth century BC.[3] (**FIGURE 11**)

The excavator dated Floor I of the Chapel Court to the second quarter of the fourth century BC (c. 380 BC) on account of artifacts and pottery found on its floors. Floor II was made some time in the third century, probably after 225 BC on account of a Hellenistic fish-plate found in a dump [6] nearby. Altar III was built on Floor II to succeed Altar I, but the top of Altar II like that of a 'baetylic stone' [24] would have been visible above the floor. The sanctuary seems to have been destroyed to be partially rebuilt in the second century, possibly in the earthquake of 140 BC. From an analysis of the statues found within the area of the complex, Riis was compelled to believe that a predecessor of the sanctuary existed on the spot. Riis argued that the statues dating to the sixth and fifth centuries BC are separated from the construction of the complex in Period F by at least a quarter of a century. He suggests that the original temple must have stood where the altar enclosure was found. The wider north and south walls of the enclosure together with their depth suggest a different building phase here. The construction would have been smaller as suggested by the 'nearly rectangular corner stone which seems to delimit the original extension of the wall towards the west' (Riis 1979: 64).

Discussion. Riis argued for a religious use of the structures at Mina Sukas on the basis of the statues and figurines found in the area, and the altars, baetyl and pit found within the altar enclosure. He considered the terracotta figure from locus 5, the "temple boy" known from the 'favissa of the Ešmun sanctuary at Sidon' as an important indication of the nature of the remains. Riis also noted that the size of the statues when complete would have attained a height of between 80 and 35 cm., indicating therefore their votive nature.

The structures discussed by Riis are indeed suggestive of cult practice, and the case which he makes is certainly acceptable. But there are some problems which need

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[3] Similar merlons were found at the *Ma'abed* at Amrith (**3.1.2**), leading the excavator there to make parallels between the nature of the deity worshipped there and here, Melqart-Heracles (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 38).

highlighting. The exemplary records kept by Riis will allow us to establish whether he was justified in describing the structures under consideration as religious buildings in the light of the discussion and criteria set out in CHAPTER II.

The first striking datum which arises from a close study of the remains is the great quantity of statues and fragments found within the enclosures and outside. It is immediately clear that objects of note found their way here, and any natural processes to account for this concentration should be eliminated given that they are on horizontal floor layers. It is, of course, possible to think that this was simply a storage area for an assemblage of terracottas but the discovery of three small platforms within the 'Altar Enclosure' provides a context which begs for an alternative function for this room. Then there is the very irregular triangular (pyramidal) boulder [24] of hard greyish limestone with a flat base found on the surface of Floor I in the middle of the room and adjacent to a pit [25] (in Floor II). Riis considered the pit to have been dug for water offerings, leading him to suppose that the neighbouring stone had a cultic significance: it was an aniconic stone idol or baetyl (Riis 1979: 46). Riis's interpretation is plausible and probably correct as his interpretation rests on the association of finds resting in primary contexts and tied to a specific spatial unit (**Table 3.2**). This association of finds could also eliminate the possibility that the boulder which probably came from the sea, was employed for construction purposes, as was the case elsewhere on the site (Riis 1970: 18, 70). As Riis points out (1979: 63), the boulder was still visible when Floor II was laid out and Altar III built. There seems to have been a preoccupation on the part of the people of Tell Sukas to preserve the boulder in its original place.

A modest case for religious ritual can be put forward on the basis of the above considerations. Furthermore, there is not sufficient evidence which can suggest domestic activity in this area. The sea shells discovered in the 'Chapel' (locus 5) could be indicative of the consumption of sea food but their occurrence with the 'temple boy' figurine and some pebbles would suggest otherwise. On the other hand, however, while the pottery was plentiful only one piece ([48]: possibly an incense-burner) was of an unusual type.

It is not difficult to speculate that the platforms could have served as altars and that the figures might be related to a deity or deities as suggested by Riis. But without reference to other parts of the eastern Mediterranean, and if a highly sceptical position is adopted, the arguments put forward are not entirely conclusive in themselves. Furthermore, there is the problem of trying to identify what is specifically Phoenician or Semitic in the structures at Mina Sukas, an issue which we touched upon earlier and to which we will return in the next chapter.

LOCUS NUMBER & DESCRIPTION	CHAPEL	CHAPEL COURT	ALTAR ENCLO.	NORTH COURT	CONTEXT
2. Stone head		×			P
3. Stone head		×			P
5. Temple Boy, sea shells, pebbles	×				P
7. Terracotta hand		×			S: DUMP
15. Bust of bearded man, lion's paw			×		P (?)
19. Terracotta head			×		P (?)
21. Stone head: club and lion's skin			×		P
22. Terracotta head			×		P
23. Terracotta figure			×		P
41. Stone frag. & terracotta figurine showing hen				×	?
42. Torso of terracotta statuette				×	?

P = Primary archaeological context

S = Secondary archaeological context

Table 3.2 Spatial distribution of statues and figurines within G/H 7, Mina Sukas.

(*source:* Riis 1979)

3.2.1 Temple of Eshmun, Bostan esh-Sheikh

Site visit: —

Reported: Renan 1864: 506-507; Macridy 1902, 1903; von Landau 1904,1905

Published: Dunand 1973b

Description. Four kilometres NE of Sidon, on the south bank of the Nahr el-Awali (the ancient Bostrenos), remains of a podium have been uncovered by archaeologists (**FIGURE 12**). Interest in the site goes back at least to the time of Renan who had visited the site in 1861 after being informed of the remains of massive blocks and a water conduit believed to be Phoenician (Renan 1864: 506-507). Interest was renewed again in 1901 when a Beirut newspaper article written by Edmond Durighello from Sidon referred to some Phoenician inscriptions discovered in the property of Nessib-Bey Djoumboulat, at Bostan esh-Sheikh. Durighello was the same person who in 1861 had informed Renan's assistant Gaillardot of the remains near Nahr el-Awali. Detailed information about the discovery is given by Theodor Macridy, who at the time was delegate of the Imperial Museum of Cosntantinople carrying out excavations at nearby Baalbek. In April 1901 he was summoned by His Excellency Hamdy-Bey, the Director of the Imperial Museum to open an inquiry into the matter (Macridy 1902: 489-495). Macridy describes how five inscriptions were discovered while an ancient wall was being demolished at Bostan esh-Sheikh. Some of the inscriptions were bequeathed to the Imperial Museum, while others which were in private hands were subsequently confiscated. The Museum authorities ordered that excavations be carried out by Macridy at Bostan esh-Sheikh to reveal the nature of the remains there (**FIGURES 13, 14**). The excavations which started on 10 June 1901 lasted six weeks and a detailed report was published a year later (Macridy 1902: 495-515; 1903). Macridy's account conveys the enthusiasm at the discovery of blocks inscribed with Phoenician letters on 25 June 1901 (Macridy 1902: 509). Their eventual decipherment and publication (Lagrange 1902) led Macridy to the conclusion that the remains at Bostan esh-Sheikh were to be identified with the remains of 'the temple of the Phoenician god Eshmun built by the King of the Sidonians Bodashtart',

as mentioned in the inscriptions. Other investigations were carried out between 1903-1904 by Wilhelm von Landau who published a comprehensive list of the inscriptions recovered (von Landau 1904, 1905).

In the early 1920s the French archaeologists Georges Conteneau and Maurice Dunand carried out soundings which they published (Conteneau 1923; Dunand 1926b). A large scale programme was started on 22 December 1963 by Dunand on the request of the Department of Antiquities of Syria, with the intent of carrying systematic excavations. This signalled the start of Dunand's exceptional career in the Levant, especially at Sidon and its environs. At Bostan esh-Sheikh he worked for a number of seasons in order to unravel the extent, nature and chronology of the site. Through his comprehensive reports (Dunand 1965: 105-109; 1966: 103-105; 1967b: 40-44; 1969b: 103-107; 1971; 1973b; 1978; 1984), Dunand showed that the remains at Bostan esh-Sheikh underwent a long history of alterations extending right down to Christian times (see Dunand 1973b: fig. 1). At the risk of oversimplification, the various building phases can be summarized as follows (**FIGURE 15**):

Phase 1 (Dunand 1973b: 11-12, fig. 1, **FIGURE 15** remains denoted by I). This is the earliest building activity on the site, consisting of what Dunand sees as a pyramidal monument, or 'ziggurat' (measuring 45 by 45 m. at the base, diagonals oriented with the cardinal points) built, probably, towards the end of the seventh century BC and beginning of the sixth by the Sidonians under Neo-Babylonian rule. In real fact, the structural remains of this 'ziggurat' include only traces of the W corner which survive to a height of about 7 m. (Dunand 1969b: 105-106); the rest is Dunand's reconstruction. To this phase belong also two water canals built over in Phase 2, which fed two basins, and yet another alongside an elongated room marked with a pair of bull's horns in relief. Dunand identified the room with a *cella* sacred to the Phoenician god Hadad (Dunand 1926b: 3-4; 1973b: plate 12, 1). Dunand argues that the source of water is to be identified with the 'Ayn Ydlal (the spring of Ydlal) mentioned alongside the god Eshmun in an inscription found in a *favissa* (Elayi 1989: 45 Inscription XXXI, 61-62), and on the sarcophagus of Eshmunazar II which speaks

of the temple and 'the spring Ydlal in the mountain' (Dunand 1984).[1] To this phase, Dunand associates a statue of a youth, a 'Couros', which shows Cypriot stylistic affinities (1971: 25, plate 3; 1973b: 12).

Phase 2 (Dunand 1973b: 12-13, fig. 1 **FIGURE 15** remains denoted II, III, IV, V). In this phase, the pyramidal monument was built over early in Persian times, about 525 BC (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 13), by a podium of enormous scale (measuring 60.40 by 40 m. and standing 22 m. high), set against the rock scarp, and above which a presumed temple was constructed surrounded by chapels and other installations in the forecourts below. Dunand finds parallels for the layout in Achaemenid architecture: the terrace at Masjed-i-Sulaiman and the residence erected by Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae. At Bostan esh-Sheikh, nothing survived of the temple itself except the remains Conteneau (1924: plate 3, 4) had identified as an 'altar'.[2] Dunand dates the construction of the podium and temple to the end of the sixth century BC, and suggests that it was the work of the Sidonian kings Eshmunazar II and Bodashtart (1965: 108).[3] The name of the King Bodashtart is in fact mentioned in twenty-six inscriptions recovered from the site. Twelve were written on large blocks of stone recovered from within the N wall of the podium during the 1901/4 excavations (Elayi 1989: 54-55, Group B: Inscriptions VI-XVII, n. 22).[4] An account of the retrieval of one of them is given by Macridy who describes how his workers uncovered the inscribed stone after they had removed other blocks (Macridy 1902: 512-514, figs 16, 17). The N wall is composed of five walls of ashlar masonry built against each other (**FIGURE 13b**). The fifth wall, composed of heavy bossed masonry,

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[1] Findspot is given in Dunand 1984: 150 as grid reference 10/13, near the NE corner of the podium.

[2] Dunand lamented the fact that a proper study of this construction was not carried out before its disappearance, but he suggested that like other Semitic temples, 'c'était sans doute une édicule servant de réceptacle à une représentation de la divinité' (1926b: 8, plate VI, 1). In his first report, Macridy (1902: 499) had suggested that the N and S walls delimited a terraced area above which the colossal monument had been built, commanding exceptional views of the valley. Wright (1985: 509), on the other hand, suggests the existence of a pillared hall raised on the esplanade, as with Achaemenid temples.

[3] Eshmunazar is not mentioned in any of the inscriptions recovered from within the podium. However, it is known from the inscription on his sarcophagus recovered at Sidon, that Eshmunazar built 'a temple to the god Eshmun at the source of Ydlal at the mountain' (Magnanini 1973: 3-5). Dunand works out the dynasty of Kings of Sidon from the inscriptions recovered from Bostan esh-Sheikh (1965).

formed the facade of the podium. The inscribed blocks (of Elayi's Group B) were recovered from the second wall nearest the rock scarp and from within its fifth course (Macridy 1902: plate II *a*; 1903: 70; Dunand 1926b: plate I). Another nine were recovered in von Landau's excavations in 1904 from the adjacent walls (Group C: Inscriptions XVIII-XXIX in Elayi 1989: 55-56, notes 28-30). Each inscription of Group B was placed on the head of the block in such a way that it would have been concealed from view by the block adjacent to it. Macridy argued that the inscribed blocks were in their original position, first because of the brightness of the pigment used for filling-in the letters ('un rouge eclatant'), and second, because they were all found built in the same wall (1903: 69). But Macridy could not explain why the inscriptions were placed between the joints in such a 'bizarre' position: 'nous laissons aux savants, qui s'occupent d'archéologie phénicienne, le soin d'expliquer la façon d'agir de Boda[s]htart' (1903: 70; 1902: 512). Elayi suggests that the inscriptions were made to commemorate the building works at the temple of Eshmun, following a practice common in the Persian empire. Group B commemorates a first series of building works on the temple, while Group C is a later addition (with a new name *ytnmlk*), when Bodashtart added other walls to the original N wall, presumably to sustain the weight of the terrace. Elayi notes that the inscriptions were not meant to be read but formed part of a religious ritual that took place when the blocks were laid out (1989: 56-57).[5]

To this phase belonged also the remains of a large column base and a capital with the double protome of a bull (Dunand 1973b: plate 12, 2), the statuettes representing children (**PLATE 2b**) (0.35 m. high on average; commonly known as "temple-boys"; see Beer & Caubet 1992: 443-444) (Dunand 1973b: plate 10, 1), and 8 potsherds with Phoenician inscriptions recovered from an area west of the podium (Vanel 1967, 1969). Elayi (1989: 46-48 Inscriptions XL-XLVI) refuses to provide a translation because the reading is uncertain. However, most seem to include personal

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[4] Macridy mentions the retrieval of seven inscriptions from the wall (1903: 69). Elayi (1989: 54) says that 26 inscriptions mentioning the name of Bodashtart were recovered in all from Bostan esh-Sheikh. She divides them into four groups.

[5] Lagrange (1902: 515) had classified them as 'pierres commémoratives'.

names which were common in Sidon at the time, with theophoric elements that recall the gods of that Phoenician city (Elayi 1989: 64-65).

Dunand notes that the construction of a system of canals (denoted IV in Dunand 1973b, fig 1; 16) (**FIGURE 15**) to carry water to the various installations was carried out during this second phase, following the building of the podium. Similarly, a marble pulpit or stand ('tribune choréographique') decorated with scenes taken from Greek mythology set in two registers, situated below a wall NE of the podium, has been dated to this phase (about fourth century BC).

Phase 3 (Dunand 1973b: 20-21, fig. 1, **FIGURE 15** remains denoted VI, VII, VIII). In this 'Hellenistic' phase, three constructions (VI a, b, c) were added N of the podium, separated from it by a rock outcrop against which the back-wall of the constructions was built, aligned with the earliest temple reconstructed for Phase 1. The most important seems to have been a roughly square space (VI b) denoted in the reports first as 'Astarte's chapel' and later as 'the pool of Astarte's throne' (*piscine du trône d'Astarté*) (Dunand 1967b: 42-43 plates 4 and 6, 1; 1969b: 103-105; 1971; 1973b: 20-21). The space measures 10.5 by 11.5 m and the S wall, decorated with a sculpted frieze along one course, survives to a height of 4.5 m. Against it, and in the middle, an empty stone throne was placed above a plinth crowned with an Egyptianising cornice (Wagner 1980: 11, Cat. No. 8) (**PLATE 2a**). A lion flanked the throne on either side (see Parrot *et al.* 1976: fig. 116). The floor was made from stone slabs laid regularly, and the wall which blocks the N side suggests that the water which gathered here was about half a metre deep. The throne at the S end, representing Astarte, would have appeared rising above the water, recalling according to Dunand the similar architectural concept used at Amrith (1971: 22).[6] Nothing was found lying on top of the floor. Dunand explains that offerings were only found in a layer 0.75 m. above the floor, presumably marking a second stage in the use of the area which no longer served as a pool. The offerings included statuettes representing small children, found elsewhere on site as offerings to Astarte and Eshmun, statues of

[6] It is odd not to find any references to the throne discovered in Room 11 at the Eastern temple of Oumm el-'Amed (3.2.3) excavated by Dunand himself.

athletes, thirteen stone urns and a number of fragments of Greek inscriptions (Soyez 1972).

Further additions to the religious complex were made in Roman and Byzantine times, but these do not concern us here (see Dunand 1973b: 22-25, remains marked in dashed lines in fig 1) (**FIGURE 15**).

Discussion. The conclusions drawn by Dunand regarding the religious nature of the site at Bostan esh-Sheikh have been accepted in the literature (see **Table 1.1**; e.g. Elayi 1989; Yon 1995b: 123-124). The case presented by Dunand for identifying the site with a religious complex is strong, and one which we are inclined to accept. The force of his various arguments lies in the fact that inscriptions were found that, (a) describe the building as a temple to the Phoenician deity Eshmun, and (b) describe the statuettes representing infants as offerings to the gods Eshmun and Astarte. Both classes of objects relate to ritual practices in their own right. In fact, Elayi is correct in pointing out that the foundation inscriptions probably formed part of a religious ritual. It is also very clear that the statuettes were serving a divine being/s, and Dunand's classification of their archaeological context as a *favissa* (and hence a secondary deposit), is acceptable. More problematic, perhaps, is his identification of the throne area with a zone sacred to Astarte. Problematic, in the sense that without reference to other sites it is difficult to find evidence here of expressive action commensurate with a ritual interpretation. It is true that the layout (a throne set in a pool of water) defies a convincing utilitarian explanation and that the throne placed along the major axis of the space might be suggestive of an important focal point, a 'special facility', for anyone standing at the opposite end. But the issue is not very clear.

Added to what has been said thus far, some important points should be made in view of the criteria and questions set out in CHAPTER II.

1. We do *not* have a detailed description of the stratigraphy encountered on the site during excavation. The physical relationships between the structures, however,

have been identified by Dunand and, on the basis of his reports, are acceptable. Unfortunately, the criteria adopted for dating the features and buildings is not always clear, and there are only a few passing references to the pottery recovered (e.g. Dunand 1973b: 20; Saliby 1997). Difficult is also the task of plotting the distribution of the major finds across the site, which would allow us an attempt at understanding the nature of the deposits and the formation processes behind them. The exception would be the inscribed blocks recovered from within the wall of the podium and the statuettes uncovered in the *favissa* and the throne area.

2. The plan of the structure of Phase 1 is a reconstruction by Dunand. In real fact we only have the remains of one corner. With regards to Phase 2, remains of the four walls of the rectangular podium have been uncovered, but we have no idea what the structure built above it looked like, despite suggestions put forward by various authors. The one construction we are sure of in plan is the area housing the throne, which appears to have served as a pool. What is difficult to ascertain is the use of this space in the second phase seen it as a deposit containing a rather special assemblage of statuary. Going by what is published, we hardly know anything about the archaeological context in which the statues were found, so deciding whether we are dealing with a primary or a secondary deposit is impossible.

3. Only passing references to the pottery recovered have been made (Saliby 1997).

In conclusion, the evidence presented by Dunand and his predecessors can be used to sustain the suggestion that Bostan esh-Sheikh was the site of a religious complex, which at one point in its history (about the fifth century BC) was dedicated to Eshmun. What we do not have are the details concerning the layout of the complex and of the rites practised here.

3.2.2 Kharayeb

Site visit: —

Reported: Kaoukabani 1973, Chébab 1954

Published: Chébab 1951-1952, 1952-1953

Description. A few kilometers from the mouth of the Litani valley on the Lebanese coast, 5 km. north of the river Qasimiye, half-way between Tyre and Sarepta, is a village known in Arabic as Kharayeb (**FIGURES 16, 31**). On 23 June 1946 Maurice Chébab, Director of the Antiquities Service of Lebanon, was informed of the discovery of a number of statuettes in the area. Excavations were carried out between 25 June and 12 October 1946 under the field direction of Antoine Sahab. About 1100 terracotta statuettes, figurines and fragments were recovered from the site, allowing the excavators to conclude that Kharayeb was a religious site, a *temple funéraire*. A detailed catalogue of the finds was published alongside an account of the excavations (Chébab 1951-1952). Work on the site was renewed between 1969-1970, under the direction of B. Kaoukabani, recovering more figurines and statuettes. The excavator re-asserted the religious nature of the remains but suggested that here was a temple to Isis-Astarte. A preliminary report of the work was published a few years later (Kaoukabani 1973).

During the first excavation campaign the archaeologists claimed to have uncovered the remains of a rectangular building (*bâtiment rectangulaire*), a paved courtyard, and a *favissa* (**FIGURE 17a**). What Chébab calls the rectagular building (measuring 33.50 by 21.50 m.) is in fact a space enclosed within two walls: a SE and a SW wall. Two courses of the SW wall survive. Opposite this wall are the remains of another wall preserved only in part, which presumably delimited the rectangular space to the NE. This NE wall was built directly on limestone bedrock; the opposite SW wall was built on soil. The walls were constructed of ashlar limestone blocks (measuring 0.60 by 0.30 by 0.20 m.) either laid out side by side perpendicular to the alignment of the wall, or in a header-and-stretcher fashion with three blocks placed along the alignment of the wall alternating with one block placed traversally. The

major axis of the rectangular space is aligned NW-SE. The intenal divisions were not established by the excavators, although the remains of three walls (A, B and C on Chébab's plan; **FIGURE 17a**) suggest some differentiation of spaces. Rectangular paving stones are preserved in the S corner, and a space in the SW wall suggests an entrance on this side.

To the SW of the rectangular building a paved area (58 by 30 m.) was uncovered, suggestive of a large outer court (*avant-cour*). Most of the paving slabs appear to have been laid out at random while some were used to frame square (of side 3.50 m.) or rectangular areas, the function of which could not be ascertained by the excavator (Chébab 1951-1952: 10). To the NW, the paving slabs give way to a cobbled surface but the relationship between these two surfaces is not clear (see below).[1] A number of terracotta figurines and statuettes were uncovered over the surface of the paved court. The spatial distribution is known from the plan produced by Chébab (1951-1952: plan B; **FIGURE 17a**).

The *favissa* was discovered about 10 m from the NW corner of the rectangular building. The excavators opened up an area of about 7 by 6 m. and 1.50 m. deep. A vast number of statuettes were recovered from this area together with coins. One fragment of a statue representing a pair of feet was inscribed with Phoenician letters dated on their form to the fifth century BC. They read the stereotyped votive formula: '... because he heard their voice; may he bless them.' (Chébab 1951-1952: 12; 1954).

Three linear trenches (1, 2, 3 in Chébab's plan B) were opened beyond the outer-court. In the first two the archaeologists uncovered remains of walls, while the third produced the remains of a cobbled area.

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[1] It should be pointed out that in the report Chébab only makes reference to one type of paving, which he finds in the court area and which he refers to as *dallage*. But it is apparent from the report, and from the second excavation campaign (Khaoukabani 1973: 42 and section drawings on p.43; **FIGURE 18a**), that this pavement of large slabs was covered over by a pavement of cobbles: 'L'ensemble des dalles a été posé directement sur la terre. Le côte N.O. de cette cour a été partiellement *envahi* par un blocage fait en petites pierres irrégulières, blocage qui non seulement s'étend sur un espace de près de 5 mètres de largeur, mais aussi qui descend en pente assez rapide en direction de l'Ouest.' (Chébab 1951-1952: 10; my emphasis) The terms "cobbles" and "slabs" are adopted here on the basis of the plan produced by Chébab (1951-1952: plan B) where the difference in the size of the stones is highly apparent.

Chébab's (1951-1952, 1953-1954) catalogue of terracotta mould-made figurines includes a vast number of subjects prevalent in Greek mythology: Aphrodite, Apis, Artemis, Demeter and Core (**PLATE 4c**), Dionysus and the Satyr, Dionysus and Silenus (**PLATE 4d**), Eros, Eros and Psyche, Harcpocrates, Heracles, Hermes (**PLATE 4b**), Zeus; child-nurterers (*kourotropheia*) (**PLATE 5d**), children, dancers, musicians and schoolboys are also represented together with a whole array of animals: ducks (**PLATE 5b**), geese, pigeons, cockerels, dogs.

Excavations at Kharayeb were renewed on 12 May 1969 (and in May 1970) with the intent of, first, uncovering the area surrounding the rectangular building, and secondly, to place sondages around the area excavated in the first campaign to ascertain its nature and trace its limits (Kaoukabani 1973: 41). The site was divided into 10 m. squares (**FIGURE 17b**). Cleaning of the area round the rectangular building revealed that most of its walls had been robbed; only the NW corner was preserved and the extent of the damage is apparent from the plan produced in the report. Excavation to the north (in squares J13-15, K14-15) revealed the continuation of the cobbled surface on which a great quantity of figurines and glass fragments were recovered. Nothing was found in squares I-H 13 (Kaoukabani 1973: 42).

Excavation beyond the rectangular building was carried out over a total area of 1500 m^2. Good stratigraphy was encountered in square J12 where two distinct layes were noted (**FIGURE 18a**). Layer I, about 0.30m deep, is composed of a first layer of cobbles covered over with a deposit of reddish earth. This layer of cobbles must be the same encountered by Chébab in the first campaign in the same area (see above). Layer II, with a depth that varies between 0.30-1.00 m, is a clayey layer lying underneath the layer of cobbles but resting above the paving slabs. It was followed in squares J13-15. By observing the remaining NW corner of the rectangular building and its relationship to the surrounding deposits, Kaoukabani claimed that the two layers correspond to two successive construction phases of the building. In Phase 1, a wall of ashlar blocks was laid down on the paving slabs. In Phase 2, another wall was built on the deposit of clay and the cobbled pavement. The wall, however, was composed of blocks placed

traversally along its alignment. Kaoukabani thinks that the building measured about 12.60 by 11 m. in Phase 1, and about 16.72 by 11 m. in Phase 2 (1973: 44).

Kaoukabani gives a separate catalogue of finds for the two layers (1973: 44-54. We are told that the figurines and statuettes unearthed from Layer I were similar to the ones uncovered during Chébab's excavation and they are described as Hellenistic. There were also two coins minted in Tyre in 112/3 and 114/5 AD respectively, and an inscription in Phoenician on a piece of pottery, the reading of which, however, is uncertain. From Layer II within squares J11-13, the excavators lifted a large number of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and statuettes of various types, but with a marked Egyptian iconography. These included the pregnant woman (*déesses de la Fécondité*; max. height 0.335 m.), the Egyptian god Bes (max. height 0.27 m.), the seated figure wearing the Egyptian Atef crown, a marching figure wearing an Egyptian loincloth and headdress, a figure holding a stemmed lotus, horses, a bull, a cockerel (max. height 0.27 m.), a soldier wearing a Corinthian-type helmet, and others. Two headless limestone statues of two personages wearing an Egyptian-style loincloth were also recovered. They measured 0.80 and 0.87 m. in height respectively. The only pottery reported includes two lamps and two plates. Kaoukabani also lists some architectural elements: part of a door lintel of soft limestone with a solar disk flanked by *uraei* or serpents in relief (**FIGURE 18b**), and three small altars.

The iconography apparent on the statuettes and figurines (especially, the lotus flower) led Kaoukabani to conclude tentatively that in a first phase the sanctuary served a cult to a mother goddess, Isis-Astarte, aided by Bes. Some of the terracottas portray the initiates of the cult, clean shaven and bald, wearing a robe and holding a lotus flower. This cult reached its heyday in a second (Hellenistic) phase, when the rectangular building was enlarged, the cult included the Greek goddess Demeter (Kaoukabani 1973: 58).

Discussion. The excavations at Kharayeb are sufficiently well known in the literature on the Phoenicians, and the religious nature of the site is generally accepted.

In his discussion of Levantine material culture in the Persian period, Stern (1982: 64) classifies the temple at Kharayeb as belonging to the 'broad type' variety. Yon (1995b: 125) acknowledges the existence of a rectangular building and its transformation in a sanctuary in the Persian period; Salles (1995: 565) makes reference to the *favissa* belonging to a *temple phenico-hellenistique*, while Elayi (1989: 88) tackles 'le sanctuaire rural de Kharayeb' as part of the civic territory of Sidon in the Persian period (also Wright 1992b: 278). But the conclusions reached from the excavations are not without problems. For a start it should be pointed out that the plan of the alleged temple was not established in its entirety in the first excavation campaign, and by the second campaign only one corner of the complex remained (**FIGURE 17**). It is difficult to understand how Kaoukabani provides dimensions of the building for each phase (which differ from Chébab's) when in fact, as he points out (1973: 41-42, 56) so little survived on the ground. The rectangular dimensions are therefore assumed. The second problem lies in the fact that no stratigraphy whatsoever was reported for the first excavation campaign and Chébab makes no reference to the two layers encountered in 1969-1970. Kaoukabani, however, assures us that Chébab had removed most of Layer I, presumably leaving Layer II intact. This seems to be the case because the figurines and statuettes lifted from Layer II by Kaoukabani came from squares (including J11-12) which had already been worked on in 1946. Yet, the problem still remains with the findspot and horizontal distribution of the figurines and the statuettes recovered from the site. The information available is incomplete and appears contradictory. For example, Chébab reports the discovery of a *favissa* 1.50 m. deep containing about 1100 terracottas, allegedly belonging to the Hellenistic phase and therefore from Layer I. But this contradicts Kaoukabani's reported depth of 0.30 m. for Layer I and a maximum of 1.00 m. for Layer II. The nature of the alledged *favissa* and the archaeological context of the terracottas is therefore unclear.

Despite the fact that there are problems with the excavations at Kharayeb the retrieval of so many figurines and statuettes from the site begs explanation. The case presented by Chébab and Kaoukabani for the identification of symbolism expressed by the use of Egyptian and Hellenistic iconography is a strong one. If we assume that

the catalogue of finds is exhaustive then we can argue convincingly against a utilitarian function for this site. The pottery published after the first campaign was found concentrated in an area of two or three meters outside the rectangular building, but it is not possible to say which layer the vessels came from. Both open and closed forms are included together with lamps and basalt mortars.[2] The interesting datum is, however, Chébab's remark that 22 miniature plates (diameter 6.5 cm.) contained crushed bones of lamb, and, in some cases, just one small bone; Chébab thought of the plates and their contents as votive offerings.[3] It is perhaps plausible enough to think of some more active function for this site rather than one simply as a store, and that these objects were used in the course of expressive actions associated with one or more divinities. The inscribed statue fragment is an important datum in this case, and goes to show that *at least* one piece of statuary was of a votive nature. But unless comparisons are made with sites elsewhere, conclusions are weak. Action on the part of the people who frequented Kharayeb can be inferred from the find of an impressive number of terracottas all concentrated in one area (i.e. evidence of redundancy): they seem to have been deliberately placed here, dumped, after being employed elsewhere, especially because no structural features of note were recorded in this area. Their systemic context can only be explained in terms of religious ritual despite the fact that the structural evidence from the 'rectangular building' is too fragmentary: the attributes and symbols carried by some statues are well known in relation to a Hellenic iconography long established; where the subject is not the divinity, children and adults are seen holding pigeons, ducks, cockerels, geese, grapes.[4] The posture and gestures of some suggests that these are images of votaries bringing along gifts: children are represented advancing bearing fruit in their tunic,[5] others including women are carrying jugs and vases, or plates.[6] The only suggestion that we might be dealing with a religious structure comes from the lintel which employs Egyptian symbolism (a disc flanked by serpents) commensurate with a ritual interpretation. What we cannot demonstrate is whether the platforms labelled 'altars' served as

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[2] Chébab 1951-1952: 13-17, figs. 2, 3 No 4 on plan B.
[3] Chébab 1951-1952: 13, 160; 1953-1954: 95.2.
[4] Chébab 1953-1954: plates 47-58.
[5] Chébab 1953-1954: plates 41-42.
[6] Chébab 1953-1954: plates 68, 98-99.

deliberate facilities during the performance of religious ritual. Taking Kharayeb in isolation, a case for religious ritual is not entirely persuasive.

3.2.3 Oumm el-'Amed

Site visit: —

Reported: Renan 1864: 695-749

Published: Dunand & Duru 1962

Description. Nineteen kilometres S of Tyre is the site of Oumm el-'Amed,[1] situated on a rocky plain which dominates the sea between the rugged promontories of Ras el-Abiad to the N and Ras en-Naqoura to the S (the famous Ladders of Tyre; Herrera 1992: 370) (**FIGURE 19**). The site covers a roughly rectangular area of about 18 ha. and is located on sloping ground which varies between 30 and 75 m. above sea level. The wadi Hamoul flows by the site. The site has been known for a long time and was visited by a number of travellers since the eighteenth century (Dunand & Duru 1962: 1-7). Count Melchior de Vogüé explored the ruins on 6 and 7 November 1853, noting the remains of a temple situated to the west of the site, which he described. Ernest Renan visited the site in 1861 but abandoned the excavations he undertook between 3-28 April when he noted that the site was of Hellenistic date (1864: 695-749). Renan had not recognised the temple remains for what they were, but had discovered three Phoenician inscriptions (*CIS* I, 7-9) and another in Greek. By the end of the nineteenth century the antiquities collected from the site by Renan and taken to the Louvre in Paris were already being cited as evidence for the eclectic nature of Phoenician art in the homeland (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 126-128, 426, 438). Excavations were again conducted in 1921 by Eustache de Lorey from the Institut Français d'Archéologie et d'Art Musulman at Damascus, uncovering more of the temple (later identified with the Temple of Milk'ashtart). Only a photographic record exists of the work undertaken.

The most significant series of excavation campaigns was undertaken by the Frenchmen Maurice Dunand and Raymond Duru between 1943 and 1945, with the

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[1] The preferred spelling for Oumm el-'Amed is the one adopted by Dunand & Duru in their official excavation report of the site (see Dunand & Duru 1962: 10).

help of the Direction du Service des Antiquités de la République Libanaise.[2] A detailed account of their activities at the site, accompanied by illustrations and vivid reconstruction drawings, was published in two volumes in 1962 (Dunand & Duru 1962). The publication also included a catalogue of the material that ended up in the Louvre after Renan's campaign. The excavations which included three deep sondages have shown that Oumm el-'Amed was occupied after the Persian period.[3] Two large temples were built in the third century BC, surrounded by numerous buildings of a domestic and industrial nature (Dunand & Duru 1962: 80-85) and a necropolis of tombs cut in the ground on the hillsides (1962: 85-87) (**FIGURE 20**). The manufacture of olive-oil seems to have been an important specialisation as attested by the large number of olive presses uncovered. No wall surrounded the town which was abandoned before the Roman take-over of the Levant (64 BC). The site was occupied again in Byzantine times when a hamlet and a small church were built around the remains of the temple of Milk'ashtart (1962: 95-99, plate 92).

Temple of Milk'ashtart (Dunand & Duru 1962: 21-56, plates 3-45, 89-99)

This religious complex is situated on the SW extremities of the town, dominating the coastal plain. It consists of a temple surrounded by a series of buildings thereby cutting it off from the rest of the site; the back wall of these buildings formed the peribolos (or sacred enclosure) of the temple complex (**FIGURE 21**). This layout, according to Dunand & Duru (1962: 27) is typical of Semitic temples. The buildings around the courtyard included a large hypostyle hall to the N, dwellings and magazines to the S and a portico to the E. Entrance to the complex was

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[2] They worked at Oumm el-'Amed for six months each year (13 May - 17 November 1943; 15 March - 15 September 1944; 28 March - 15 August 1945) (Dunand & Duru 1962: 6-7). The reference to the campaigns starting in 1942 in Jidejian & Lipinski (1992: 485) follows on Dunand & Duru's dates given in their preface.

[3] Grainger (1991: 67-68) says that a farm had been established on the site 'since about 700 BC', but no page reference is given to n. 48 which cites Dunand & Duru's publication. Berlin (1997: 77) repeats the same thing. The French excavators are categorical that at Oumm el-'Amed, '[...] aucune construction antérieure au V^e^ siècle n'a pu être entrevue' (1962: 19); only three Cypriot sherds excavated from the levelling fill for the podium of the temple of Milk'ashtart are indicative of some activity dating to the beginning of the seventh century BC (1962: 203-204, 233; also Peckham 1968: 77 n. 30). This, however, contradicts their own remarks that earlier wall constructions were uncovered in the sondage in the temple of Milk'ashtart, shown in distinctive cross-hatching in their plan (plate

through a monumental doorway to the SE and a secondary doorway in the N portico. The complex covers a trapezoidal area of 56 m. (N - S) by 61 m. (E - W). Its W extremity was built on an artificial fill, 5m. high, to level out the westwards slope in the terrain (plate 93, E). The foundation of the temple *cella* which measures 24 m. by 8.50 m. and is oriented W-E, was built of massive blocks built on bedrock and pointed with a chalky mortar (plate 93, D). The courtyard floor was composed of rectangular stone slabs. The solid podium of the *cella* rises to a height of 1.20 m. above the floor of the yard (plate 8). Nothing survived of what had originally been built on the podium, but staircases at the E and NE end of the podium were assumed from the traces uncovered (plate 7). A statue showing a lion or a sphinx [M.362][4] (plate 34.3) recovered from the immediate vicinity suggested to the excavators that a pair flanked the E monumental staircase (plate 91). Dunand & Duru suggested that the E end of the temple included four columns, which in fact they reconstruct (**FIGURE 22**), but noted that no such architectural remains could be found. They also noted that it is not possible to reconstruct the internal divisions of the *cella* in Classical Greek fashion (*pronaos*, *cella*, *adyton*). Opposite the facade of the *cella* and beyond the presumed staircase, there was a rectangular construction in sandstone blocks which the excavators identified with a monumental altar; no basin that would contain water for sacred ablutions was identified (1962: 28).

Eastern Temple and Throne Chapel (Dunand & Duru 1962: 56-80, plates 46-70, 100-107)

The complex is situated 160 m. W of the other temple, at a height above sea level ranging between 53 - 59 m. Like the other sanctuary, the complex consists of a series of buildings (1962: 65-69) and porticos (1962: 62-64) constructed around a rectangular courtyard measuring 35 by 22 m. overall (1962: plates 103); the temple is built inside at the W end (**FIGURE 23**). Entrance is through three doorways (1962: 69-75). The lintel of SE entrance has been found (E.1, 5, 12, 25; 1962: fig. 16, plate 63.2,

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90), and also in rooms 21, 14 and 34, and in the SE corner of the courtyard. They suggest that, 'ce sont peut-être les restes d'un premier sanctuaire' (1962: 234).

62.3) (**FIGURE 25**). It measures 4.40 m. overall and depicts a winged sun-disc flanked by *uraei* in relief; at each corner is a figure draped in a long tunic and wearing a pointed headdress, brandishing a sceptre with a curved end to which is attached a ram's head crowned with a disc set in a crescent, a representation of the horns of the Egyptian cow-goddess Hathor (1962: 71, 170-171, 171 n. 1, fig. 70, plates 64, 104-107; *cf.* also plate 76). The whole complex describes a large rectangle, oriented E-W and measuring about 60 by 35 m. The *cella* of the temple consists of a rectangular podium built of large, roughly regular blocks. It is about half a metre high, and measures 14.50 by 7.80 m. Unlike the rest of the complex, the podium is oriented WSW-ENE, an exception which the excavators suggest was dictated by the configuration of the terrain (1962: 79-80). Entrance to the *cella* was through a monumental doorway at the E end reached by a flight of steps: the threshold slab was found with an opening measuring 1.96 m, together with fragments of the pillars that framed the door. A lateral door existed at the NE corner of the *cella* giving access to the main entrance kept bolted from the inside. The lintel, measuring 2.92 m. in length and decorated with a disc flanked by *uraei* in relief, was recovered too (Dunand & Duru 1962: fig. 13). The *cella* is divided into three areas: Hall 1 measuring 8.80 by 5.60 m which includes a slab flooring; a wall divides the W end into two rooms (2, 3) measuring 3 by 2 m. and 3 by 3 m. respectively. The excavators noted that nothing was found to suggest that the facade of the temple included a porch with four columns and a pediment (Dunand & Duru 1962: 59), although a reconstruction drawing by Duru includes the columns (1962: fig. 17) (**FIGURE 24**).

In the NW corner of the complex, adjacent to the *cella*, is a space or room (11) interpreted by the excavators as 'certainement une chapelle' (Dunand & Duru 1962: 67-69, plate 53, 101). It is an L-shaped room but seems to have been originally rectangular with the W and N walls of rooms 9 and 10 having been added later (**FIGURE 26**). Entrance is through a moumental doorway at the N end of the E wall, 1.10 m. wide, framed by pillars and surmounted by a 2.22 m. wide lintel (E.6; 1962: fig. 15, plate 63.1; but see Wagner 1980: 33). The lintel is decorated by a disc flanked by *uraei* and wings. Beneath the first disc is an inverted crescent over a smaller disc.

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[4] This is the system of recording adopted by Dunand & Duru in their inventory presented in chapter VI. The letter 'M' followed by the number means the object was found in the temple of Milk'ashtart; an 'E' denotes pieces from the Eastern temple.

Opposite the door, in the NW corner of the room a rectangular podium was uncovered, measuring about 3.00 by 2.75 and 1.20 m. high.[5] It is constructed as an external frame of masonry filled with rubble and earth. A flight of five steps on the S side allowed access to the podium. In the space between the podium and the N wall of the room, fragments of a stone sphinx-throne were found (E. 33, 34; 1962: 168-169, plate 67). Dunand & Duru suggested that the throne was placed above the podium, facing the door. A lintel (E.15) was found lying above the podium. The Frenchmen considered it to be too long (2.60 m.) and too heavy to have crowned a naos or baldacchino above the podium (1962: 68). Against the S wall of the room, a plinth composed of two neatly cut slabs (measuring 1.13 m square) was found. Dunand & Duru suggested that a cult object, altar, statue or also a throne would have been placed above the plinth. They, in fact, suggest that the lintel mentioned above could have crowned a niche above these two slabs. Nine of the twelve terracotta figurines from the Eastern Temple were recovered from the Throne Chapel (Dunand & Duru 1962: 219). They are of the type known from the site of Kharayeb (**3.2.2**) and according to the excavators they played a part in a cult to Astarte inside the chapel (1962: 236).

From the coins and pottery recovered during the excavation, Dunand & Duru consider the heyday of the site and temples to have been the third and second centuries BC. They interpret the site as having been a rural religious centre dependant on Tyre, with its farms, dwellings and accomodation for people in transit along the coast (1962: 233). They argue that the layout of the twin religious complexes fits exactly in a *koiné* of sacred architecture of the Semites in the western Levant, with roots which can be traced back to Canaanite Byblos. However, the influence of neighbouring cultural traditions can be discerned: the deep foundations for the podium of the temple of Milk'ashtart suggest a Persian influence, as those of Bostan esh-Sheikh (**3.2.1**); the architectural orders are a mixture of Greek (Doric and Ionic) and Egyptian (the cavetto cornice) (1962: 237-238). The iconography of the reliefs is a mixture too: Assyrian are the gestures of prayer and presentation of offerings depicted

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[5] Only the height of the podium has been supplied by Dunand & Duru (1962: 68). The other two dimensions have been read off plate 101 and are approximate.

on the stele; Egyptian is the winged sun disc. Egyptian are also some of the theophoric elements (Osiris, Bastet) in the personal names of the inscriptions, but the language is Phoenician not Greek. Dunand & Duru argue that the ensemble is Semitic, and this is what is transferred westwards to Carthage by the Phoenicians: '[...] six siècles après la fondation de Carthage, la civilisation phénicienne d'Asie et celle d'Afrique du Nord étaient demeurées une.' (1962: 241-242)

Discussion. The monumental report dedicated to Oumm el-'Amed is by far one of the most detailed accounts of an excavation in the Phoenician heartland. The site is well known in the general literature and the reconstructions of the temples have found pride of place in a number of publications (see **Table 1.1**). Colonna (1989-1990: 208-209, figs 7, 8) considers the temples at Oumm el-'Amed in the context of the terminology adopted on the inscribed gold sheets from Pyrgi (**3.6.1**) and classifies the religious monuments as belonging to the 'enclosed' type ("*a recinto*"). Ciasca (1993: figs 2, 3) does the same in discussing the layout of the sanctuary at Tas-Silg, Malta (**3.5.1**). Wagner (1980: 27-31) tackles the Egyptianising motifs adopted in the various architectural elements found on the site, pointing out that the overwhelming influence on the Eastern temple is Egyptian, whereas it is Greek in the temple of Milk'ashtart (1980: 110-111). Other authors (e.g. Millar 1983, Grainger 1991) have discussed Oumm el-'Amed in the context of the Hellenisation of the Phoenician cities in the Levant noting the importance of the use of the Phoenician language in maintaining a local, Semitic identity.

To argue whether the structures at Oumm el-'Amed are religious buildings or not might seem a bit superfluous given the consensus in the literature: the published reconstructions of the complexes evoke visual images of Phoenician temples to which scholars are hardly accustomed, leading, however, to erroneous statements (e.g. Yon 1995b: 126); only Lipinski (1995a: 428) expresses concern while noting the archaeological reality. But in presenting a case to justify seeing religious complexes at Oumm el-'Amed those same reconstructions have to be taken apart, and the report by Dunand & Duru dissected to tease out information that might satisfy the criteria

outlined in CHAPTER II. Luckily, the Frenchmen provide an inventory of the architectural fragments and sculptures recovered from both temples, providing a horizontal distribution of them, thus allowing us to put the pieces in their proper archaeological context (plates 91, 101); unfortunately, however, they fail to present a coherent account of the stratigraphy encountered on site, so that we do not know at what depth most artefacts and architectural fragments were recovered. This limits what we can do with the inventory of finds, as for example, trying to differentiate between primary or secondary deposits, which, as discussed in CHAPTER II, should form a crucial part in an argument concerning ritual activity on a site. At this stage, it is important to highlight a number of points:

1. Whatever existed on the podium in the alleged temple of Milk'ashtart does *not* exist, and the reconstruction (**FIGURE 22**) supplied by Dunand & Duru is *thoroughly conjectural*. The same can be said of the Eastern temple (**FIGURE 24**); here, however, we have at least an idea of the internal divisions of what existed on the podium with the W end divided into two rooms.

2. Of the inscriptions allegedly recovered from Oumm el-'Amed we only know the exact findspot of five of them (see **Table 3.3**), the rest having been recovered by Renan or purchased from locals to end up in museums in Paris, Copenhagen and Beirut: two (Nos 3, 15) were reutilised as building material and therefore come from secondary contexts; one (No. 13) came from 'rubble' in Room 22 in the temple of Milk'ashtart; and another (No. 14) was found outside the main entrance to the same temple; the last one (E.20) is illegible. For our purposes, inscription No. 14 is perhaps the most important: neatly inscribed on a plinth or base of a statue 1.10 m. high (M.436; Dunand & Duru 1962: plate 30.1) placed to the right of the main entrance to the western complex, it is a record of a dedication (presumably of the statue itself) made by 'Abdosir to the deity Milk'ashtart (**FIGURE 21**). The statue is of a type well known from other Levantine sites of the Persian period (Dunand & Duru 1962: 156, notably from the *Ma'abed* at Amrith, **3.1.2**).[6] It is this

[6] The statue is of a standing male figure with left arm held against the body and the right raised, presumably in a gesture of adoration. The statue wears only an Egyptianising kilt with an un-decorated pendant flap (*deventeau*). Of the parallels from Amrith cited by Dunand & Duru (1962: 156 n. 1) the

inscription, together with others (Nos 1, 2, 4) which are thought to have been recovered from the area sorrounding the western temple, that has induced Dunand & Duru to see Milk'ashtart as the chief deity worshipped here. Peckham (1968: 76 n. 29) argues that Milk'ashtart was "god of Hammon" and not "'el Hammon" as held by Dunand & Duru, Hammon being the ancient name of Oumm el-'Amed (also Bonnet 1988: 125).

3. Dunand & Duru date both temples on the basis of the coins and the inscriptions. The Eastern temple seems to have been built earlier as suggested by one coin of Ptolemy I recovered from within; coins of Ptolemy II were recovered from both temples (1962: 233). Two of the inscriptions can be dated from their contents (1962: 181-184, 185-187; Peckham 1968: 76-77). One inscription (No. 4) is dated to the fifty-third year of the people of Tyre, the twenty-sixth year of Ptolemy III (247-221 BC) and Arsinoe or 222-221 BC, and commemorates the construction of the porticos. Although bought from the village of Masoub 5 km. away from the site in 1885, there is hardly any doubt that the inscription comes from Oumm el-'Amed, and presumably from the temple of Milk'ashtart. Another inscription (No. 1) is dated in the hundred and eightieth year of the Lord of Kings, the hundred and forty-third year of the people of Tyre, that is 132 BC. It commemorates the restoration of a doorway to the god Ba'alshamin. The inscription was recovered by Renan in 1861 from an area which would correspond with the remains of the temple of Milk'ashtart, suggesting that this deity was worshipped here by the second half of the second century BC (Dunand & Duru 1962: 182). Some of the other inscriptions can be arranged in a hypothetical sequence according to the genealogy. Assuming that the office of the people mentioned was hereditary Peckham suggests a span of time between c. 292-132 BC. A palaeographical study shows that none of the inscriptions are earlier than the third century (Peckham 1968: 77 n. 31).

4. The inventory of statuary includes 25 pieces from the temple of Milk'ashtart and 26 pieces from the Eastern temple (Dunand & Duru 1962: chapter VI). Of the 25

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closest is only one: Dunand 1944-1945: plates 17.12; the rest are draped in a full-length chiton which is not Egyptian but Cypriot.

pieces from the temple of Milk'ashtart,[7] the best preserved and most informative are perhaps M.436 (and a fragment M.504, attached to an inscribed pedestal M.435) mentioned above, and the sphinxes (M.337, 362) which most probably flanked the staircase to the podium. The 26 pieces from the Eastern temple include:[8] 16 sphinxes or fragments thereof; a stone throne (E. 33, 34) and a mutilated head (E. 35; natural size) from the NW corner of Room 11; a fragment of a male torso holding an elongated object from Room 22 (E.102; height 0.38 m.), a type known from the *favissa* of Amrith (**3.1.2**); a statuette depicting what appears to be a seated female from Room 23 (E.170; height 0.24 m.); and fragments of a statuette of a draped male figure from the southern entrance to the temple (E.173; height 0.30 m.). A torso of a figure draped in Egyptian dress (E.213; height 0.55 m.) was found beyond the temple compound to the E.

5. Dunand & Duru (1962: 219) also make reference to fragments of about a dozen terracotta figurines recovered from the Eastern temple, similar to ones discovered at Kharayeb (**3.2.2**). Nine were discovered in Room 11, the Throne Chapel: six on either side of the eroded W wall and three from the immediate vicinity of the throne. According to the excavators they formed part of a cult to Astarte venerated inside the chapel. Reference is only made to six figurine fragments depicted in the plates.[9]

In view of what has been discussed thus far, we can attempt to establish whether we are justified in seeing religious buildings at Oumm el-'Amed, *if the site is*

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[7] These include Nos. 10-15, 17, 98, 306, 337, 362, 396, 426, 436, 439, 504-509, 532, 534, 600, 602. The findspot of some has been provided: M.98 is from the necropolis; M.306 from the construction fill N of Room 33; M.396 south of Room 19; M.600 (a statuette depicting a human figure with a lion on the shoulder) from Room 22; M. 602 (a head of a bearded man) from the floor of Room 602. M.12-15 and M. 98 represent sphinxes.

[8] These include Nos. 14, 33-35, 56, 88-91, 102, 112, 116, 123, 129-130, 134-136, 141, 155, 165, 170-171, 173, 181, 213. E.171 is given simply as a sculpted fragment; E.181 is a gargoyle in the shape of a lion's head.

[9] Dunand & Duru (1962: 219) list six figurines from either side of the W wall. Note 4 refers to five illustrations: plate 69.5 and plate 70.1, 3, 5 and fig. 89. However, figure 89 does not depict a terracotta figurine but pottery lamps. Of the three figurines lifted from the area immediately surrounding the throne only reference to one illustration is made: plate 69.6. Unfortunately, the figurines depicted on the plates 69 and 70 which number 12 in total are given a catalogue number preceded by the letter "E" for which a list is not supplied. The code is similar to the one used for the inventory of architectural pieces and statuary in chapter VI but these do not correspond.

considered in isolation. First, what sticks out immediately even from a cursory look at the site-plan (Dunand & Duru 1962: plate 89) is the general similarity in the arrangement of the two complexes (**FIGURE 20**): both include a rectangular podium set in a courtyard and surrounded by buildings. Both complexes have the same general orientation (W-E), and even though the podiums are aligned on slightly different axes, we have seen that the construction of one seems to have been constrained by the topography. Also, their size and architecture cuts them off from the rest of the site which includes buildings constructed on a much smaller scale, lacking in the architectural finesse and detail so apparent in the two complexes. It is clear that these were monuments of importance.

In CHAPTER II we argued that one of the key elements in discerning religious ritual archaeologically is to look for redundancy. At Oumm el-'Amed redundancy can be seen in the repetitive use (at least twelve times) of one particular decorative motif: the winged disc flanked by *uraei* sculpted in relief on doorways. Placed prominently in the middle of lintels, and in one case (**FIGURE 25**), flanked by personages with an upraised arm, it is plausible to suggest that we have here representations which are clearly of some symbolic significance: placed at each entrance to this complex of buildings, disc, crescent, feathered wings, and snakes appear in association over and over again. The sphinx, half animal and half human, also appears repeatedly in the shape of statues recovered from the site. It also adorns the throne discovered in Room 11 of the Eastern complex, which probably fell from the podium where it had been placed prominently opposite the doorway. It can be suggested that the actual display of these symbols and fantastic animals in prominent locations be interpreted as a form of deliberate, expressive action; but we still have to demonstrate that these complexes were the locations of expressive actions *serving a supernatural being or divinity*. That such action actually took place at Oumm el-'Amed can be discerned from the inscriptions: No. 13 is the dedication of a statue to Milk'ashtart, as is No. 14 placed together with the statue outside the main entrance to the western complex; Nos 1 and 2 specifically relate how restoration work was done in honour of the gods Ba'al Shamim and Milk'ashtart respectively. On the stelae decorated in relief personages are shown carrying incense holders in one hand, while the other is raised in adoration

(**PLATE 16a**). The religious reading of the scene is corroborated by the inscription on one of the stele which has been read, albeit with reservations, as 'Ba'alyaton, the priest of Milk'ashtart'.[10]

Taking the site of Oumm el-'Amed in isolation, a case for identifying the two building compounds as sanctuaries can be made.

[10] Dunand & Duru 1962: 160-163, 188, plate 79.3; also plate 77.

Table 3.3 Phoenician inscriptions from Oumm 'el-Amed.

(*source* Dunand & Duru 1962: 181-196)

Inscription	Findspot	Dimensions of the Inscription	Material and Nature	Date
Dunand & Duru: No 1 *CIS* I, 7	[Temple of Milk'ashtart]	0.32 x 0.29	stone; commemorative	132/131 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 2 *CIS* I, 8	[Temple of Milk'ashtart]	?	stone; dedicatory: to Milk'ashtart el Hammon	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 3	8/C M.300 Courtyard: built in a post-Byzantine wall	?	stone; dedicatory sundial to Milk'Ashtart el-Hammon	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 4 *RES* 1205	Bought in 1885 [Temple of Milk'ashtart]	0.28 x 0.23	marble; commemorative: to Milk'ashtart & Ba 'al Hammon	222/221 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 5 *RES* 250	?	1.81 x 0.60	stone; commemorative stela of Baal'yaton chief of the pressers	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 6 *RES* 307	?	0.25 x 0.11	stone; dedicatory: stela to Baal'yaton priest of Milk'ashtart	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 7 *RES* 504a	?	0.15 x 0.18	stone; dedicatory statue to El	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 8 *RES* 504b	?	0.14 x 0.16	stone; dedicatory statue to Osiris (?); written on its back	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 9	?	0.38 x 0.16	stone; dedicatory stela	late 2nd cent. BC
Dunand & Duru: No 10	?	0.17 x 0.06	stone; commemorative stela with personage	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 11	?	0.10 x 0.08	stone; commemorative stela of Isibarak	200-150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 12	?	0.26 x 0.06	stone; plinth of stela for 'Abdosir	150 BC

Table 3.3 (*Cont.*) Phoenician inscriptions from Oumm 'el-Amed.

(*source* Dunand & Duru 1962: 181-196)

Inscription	Findspot	Dimensions of the Inscription	Material and Nature	Date
Dunand & Duru: No 13	8/D M.363 Rubble in Rm. 22, temple of Milk 'ashtart	0.45 m. wide	stone; dedicatory: statue base to Milk'ashtart el-Hammon	3rd cent. BC
Dunand & Duru: No 14	8/E M.435 Main entrance to temple of Milk 'Ashtart	0.57 x 0.52 x 0.425	stone; dedicatory: statue-base to Milk 'Ashtart el-Hammon	150 BC
Dunand & Duru: No 15	7/I E.154 reutilized as a threshold slab between rooms 24, 25 in East. temple	?	stone; dedicatory stela	?
Dunand & Duru: No 16 found nearby	?	0.38 x 0.05	stone; commemorative funerary stela to Ba'alshamar, chief of the porters	200-150 BC
Not listed in Dunand & Duru: chapter VIII	7/H E.20	?	stone; letters are not legibile	?

3.2.4 Sarepta

Site visit: —

Reported: Pritchard 1975

Published: Pritchard 1978, 1988

Description. Between 1969 and 1974, the University Musuem of the University of Pennsylvania conducted excavations at the modern village of Sarafand (ancient Sarepta), 13 km. south of Sidon on the Lebanese coast (**FIGURE 30**). The excavations, directed by James B. Pritchard, focused on two areas: area I, the ancient Roman/Byzantine harbour facilities close to the seashore at Ras es-Shiq, and area II, the tell at the opposite promontory of Ras el-Qantara. Two soundings were carried out in area II: Souding X (II-A/D-2/9) measuring 800 m.^{2} and Sounding Y (II-K/L-20/21) measuring 100 m.^{2}.[1] The results of the excavations have been partly published (Anderson 1988; Khalifeh 1988; Koehl 1985; Pritchard 1975, 1978, 1988).

During the excavations in Sounding X, boxes A/B-4, a room (Room 71) was found at Level 3. According to Pritchard it served 'a cultic function' and was designated a shrine (Shrine 1) on account of its 'architectural features and associated artifacts' (Pritchard 1975). Moreover, the retrieval of an inscription suggested to Pritchard that the shrine was dedicated to Tanit-Ashtart (Pritchard 1978: 131-148; 1982). Room 71 was bounded by four walls 471, 480, 478, 479, which were almost totally robbed in antiquity. The interior measured 2.56 m. for its N-S axis and 6.40 m. on an E-W one, but it is 0.32 m. wider at the E than it is at the W end. According to the excavator, the builders' use of pre-existing structural elements would account for this discrepancy. When the room was excavated in 1972 the excavators thought the room formed part of a larger unexcavated building to the north, sharing with it the common wall 478, against which wall 479 was built. This is what the director relates in the preliminary report written at the close of the 1972 season (Pritchard 1975: 14). This was confirmed two years later (Pritchard 1978: 134). A sounding made below the

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[1] The designations given to the respective soundings mean the following: Sounding X (II-A/D-2/9) means boxes from A to D and from 2 to 9 within the site grid, and similarly Sounding Y (II-K/L-20/21) boxes K to L and 20 to 21. Each box or plot within the grid was 5m square.

floor of the eastern half of Room 71 showed that it had been built on a layer of broken pottery, c. 1.10 m. deep, interpreted by the excavators as a "waster" dump from one of the kilns in the immediate vicinity. The foundation trench for wall 478 had cut into this layer of pottery. The floor of the room consisted of a hard, gray cement, about 0.10 m. thick, and finished off to a smooth surface. It was traced running up to wall 471, and under the stones of a bench built against it. The floor could not be traced along the west end of wall 478, because it was broken away when that part of the wall and its bench were robbed away. Entrance to the room was through a 1 m. wide opening in wall 471, from a street that ran along the south side of the room, but this was blocked when, according to the excavators, the street level built up to a height which caused flooding in the building. The new entrance seems to have been placed in the north end of wall 479 but its width was difficult to ascertain. Another entrance into the shrine was from the adjoining room through the north wall 478 (Pritchard 1978: 134).

The benches, which measured 0.30-0.40 m. wide and 0.20 m. high, were built of field stones set in mortar. They had their top and side covered with cement to form a smooth surface (Pritchard 1975: 16).

At the west end of the room, the excavators uncovered 'an offering table or altar', measuring 1.02 by 0.92 m. The sides were built of ashlar blocks set about 0.30 m. above the cement floor, and the centre was filled with rubble and a well-cut sandstone block. This block (measuring 0.28 by 0.32 m. and 0.20 m. thick) had a series of depressions cut into its face, part of which had been cemented over. When the cement was removed, however, the depressions were revealed together with a system of channels drilled into two sides of the slab. In his preliminary report, Pritchard thought it impossible to conjecture what function the stone had, but it was apparent that the depressions and the channels served to drain some form of liquid. He concluded however, that 'the stone was not in its original position since, within the rough filling of the offering table, there were no channels leading from the two channels of the stone [...]' (Pritchard 1975: 17). Scattered around the table (but nowhere else within the room), a fine layer of dark ash and carbon was exposed.

A break in the cement floor measuring about 0.50 by 0.60 m., about 0.50 m. to the east of the table, was also identified. The excavators revealed a layer of yellow clay and stone chips (0.20 m. high) in the depression, lying above a thin layer of dark carbonized material resting on the fill of the cement floor. By observing the regularities and irregularities in the break in the floor Pritchard concluded that an object of considerable height (perhaps 1 m.) must have stood in the hole and that it was levered out destroying the thick cement floors in the process. The base of the object was about 0.40 m. square and it was in place when the cement was poured. Pritchard suggested that the object was 'probably a stone b[a]etyl or possibly an incense altar' (1975: 18).

The material uncovered lying on top of the cement floor and from within the table was assigned to Level 3. It included a large variety of terracotta figurines, amulets and charms, inscriptions, beads, pottery lamps and vessels. One noteworthy inscription was found incised on an ivory plaque, measuring 3.3 by 5 cm. It mentions a statue made in honour of Tanit-Ashtart (Pritchard 1978: 104-105; 1982). According to Pritchard, these were votive objects, a 'collection of trinkets from the *favissa*, the repository of gifts brought to the sacred place as offerings to the deity' (1978: 140).

Above the cement floor of Room 71, a deposit of debris and fill about 0.40 m. in depth was excavated. This was in turn sealed by another cement floor pertaining to a later building (Level 2). The eastern and southern extent of the floor were traced because the cement ran to wall 471 and to a robber trench from which wall 479 was lifted. There were no indications that benches had been built against these walls. No secure limits were found for the floor to the north and west because they ran into the baulks of II-A-4. In the area of floor uncovered there were no indications 'of either an offering table or a socket for a b[a]etyl' but Pritchard suggests on the basis of three terracotta figurines found on the floor that the building could have had a cultic function, just like Room 71 beneath it. He refers to it as 'Shrine 2' (1975: 20: 22).

In his report, Pritchard sought comparisons with other sites in the Levant to argue that the benches, tables or shelves are features characteristic of cultic shrines

(Pritchard 1975: 18-20). He refers to set-ups similar to Sarepta's Room 71 at Hazor, Lachish, Beth Shan, Arad, and Tell Qasile. At Enkomi and Kition in Cyprus striking parallels exist too. At Kition-Kathari **(3.3.2)**, benches were built along the south and north walls of the temple (600-450 BC) and a square altar faced with gypsum was also constructed (**FIGURE 43a**).

From the size of Room 71 and the finds associated with it, Pritchard concludes that the shrine was too small to have been the major temple of a city as large as Sarepta. However, he argues that the E-W dimension (12 m.) is impressive enough to suggest that 'Shrine 1 could have been either a small cult room within a larger complex of a temple or a private shrine attached to a palace' (1975: 38).

Room 71 was dated to the eighth-seventh centuries BC on the basis of the votive objects found on the floor and on the table. More specifically, the eighth century date was assigned to an ivory head of a woman (Sar.3034) which had parallels in Assyrian contexts. The letter forms of an inscription which mentions Astarte-Tanit would point to a date around the end of the seventh or the beginning of the sixth centuries (Pritchard 1982). The later 'shrine' (Shrine 2) was dated to the sixth-fifth centuries on account of the seated pregnant woman figurine found on the floor within Level 2 (Pritchard 1975: 39-40; 1978: 147; but see below).[2]

Discussion. The excavations at the coastal site of Sarepta have been commended by many scholars. Pritchard's dig was conducting according to the principles of stratigraphic excavations and his preliminary report for Sounding X, II-A/B-4 shows that he was careful to distinguish between deposits, to define their characteristics and to give their extent and location. Observable stratigraphic units were termed *levels* but, as Frendo points out (1992b: 331), *level* was not equated with *separate* observable layers of earth or features but 'the level includes all of the undesignated layers of soil lying above the lower sealing limit of the level, up to but not including the floor or other limit of the next level' (Khalifeh 1988: 7; see also

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[2] An example of this type from Kharayeb is shown in **PLATE 3b**.

Pritchard 1988: 3). So, Level 3 of Room 71 includes the cement floor and the three deposits (about 0.40 m. deep) visible in the section drawing which lie on top of it. The cement floor of 'Shrine 2' seals these deposits and is therefore designated Level 2. Indeed, all finds (including pottery) from these levels were catalogued according to the level and not to the different layers from within each level.

Plotting the finds horizontally across the floor space of Room 71 is more problematic because a plan showing the findspot of individual objects is not provided. Only a reconstruction in broad outline is possible by a close reading of the reports (Pritchard 1975; Khalifeh 1988). The objects found in Level 3 were concentrated in the west part of the room and 'came for the most part from the filling within and on top of the offering table, from the socket for the b[a]etyl or standing stone, from the floor of Room 71, and from the break in the floor at the northwest corner' (Pritchard 1975: 22; 38). Five of the beads were found in the offering table filling (1975: 35). No objects were found beside any of the benches (1975: 38). No information is given as to the exact findspot of the inscription.

An obstacle in assigning findspots to the 'votive objects' was caused by stratigraphic uncertainties in the NW corner of Room 71. In the preliminary report (Pritchard 1975) we are told that the break in the cement floor of Shrine 1 resulting from stone looting in antiquity, would have caused the 'possibility of intrusion of materials from Shrine 2 into the level of Shrine 1 below it' (p. 20). Pritchard also points out that, 'material assigned to Level 2 should probably include material which came from a disturbed area within Level 3, the level of Shrine 1, and other artifacts which fell from a higher level on April 28, 1972 with the collapse of a balk on the north side of II-A-4 after a heavy rain' (p. 21). The excavators had problems to relate the artefacts from this debris to the various levels: 'Although the objects recovered on that day are labelled as having come from Level 3, Shrine 1, it is entirely possible that they are a part of the remains of Shrine 2, immediately above it [...]' (p. 22). In the preliminary report Pritchard says that the uncertainity of the provenance of certain artefacts are indicated (1975: 22) but this is not the case. In the catalogue of finds from A-II-4 Pritchard explains how the fragment of a figure of the seated pregnant

woman thought to be intrusive and assigned to the later Shrine 2 in 1972 had nine parallels in the excavation of the north building, Level 3. According to Pritchard this provides evidence against the theory of intrusion (Pritchard 1988: 55). This would also mean that the dates assigned to Shrine 2 on the basis of this type of figurine (see above) have to be revised. More secure dating would come from a study of the ceramic forms uncovered beneath the floor of Shrine 1 which would provide a *terminus post quem* for the construction of the room (Pritchard 1975: 14), and from a study of the deposits of pottery from the streets which ran beside the building (1975: 39). But this exercise seems not to have been done to date.[3]

TYPE	FREQUENCY		
	TOTAL	II-A-4 LEVEL 3	SHRINE AREA (II-A-4 & ADJACENT PLOTS
Beads	140	94 / 67%	95 / 68%
Figurines	96	36 / 37.5%	76 / 79%
Inscriptions	21	1 / 4.7%	8 / 79%
Masks	9	1 / 11.1%	-
Scarabs & Amulets	40	27 / 67.5%	?
Whorls	74	-	1 / 1.4%

Table 3.4 Frequency of objects from Sounding X.

The case presented by Pritchard for identifying Room 71 with a religious building is indeed a strong one (Pritchard 1978: 139-148). Despite the fact that there is evidence to suggest that routine domestic activity could have taken place in Room 71 (this includes beads and other objects used for personal adornment and grooming, and also a number of gaming pieces), a plausible utilitarian function for this room cannot be proposed, other than it could have served as a storage area. But then it would be difficult to explain the benches which are more suggestive of a gathering of people. In fact, it is interesting to note than no whorls (out of a total of 76 found at Sarepta) came from Room 71, while only one was lifted from the adjacent plots. On

[3] From the whole of Sounding X at Sarepta only the plots at A/B-8/9 provided reliable evidence for the succession of occupations of the entire area. This was published by Issam Khalifeh who made a study of the Late Bronze and Iron Age periods (Khalifeh 1988).

the contrary, there is no shortage of small, portable items from Room 71 which have a symbolic significance: amulets of Egyptian deities (the dwarf god Bes, Ptah, Bastet, the cat, Horus as a child, the sow, the "Eye of Horus"), the sphinx throne, and a woman's head wearing the sacred *uraeus*. The distribution of finds (figurines, inscriptions, scarabs and amulets) across the site shows a marked concentration for these particular small objects in the alleged shrine (Room 71) and the adjacent plots (**Table 3.4**). Indeed, one can point out that the retrieval of so many figurines, scarabs and amulets was quite extra-ordinary for Sarepta. Their distribution *within* the room, concentrated on and around the table at the W end, suggests that we have here objects coming from a primary archaeological context (i.e. *not* a ritual cache, or *favissa*, which implies a secondary context), which had fallen from the low platform or table. In this sense, it is possible to think that the table served as a special facility for the display of these symbolic items, alongside twelve saucer lamps found nestled on the step before the table (Pritchard 1978: 139). Placed at the end of the major axis of the room, and flanked by benches running along two walls, the table occupies an important focal point for whoever enters the room from the opposite end. The architectural arrangement is symmetrical and no doubt the objects displayed upon the table would imply some sort of 'special action'.

While it has been demonstrated that we have ample evidence for redundancy in Room 71, we still need to establish in terms of the criteria discussed in CHAPTER II, that these items were used in the course of expressive actions associated with a divinity. We are not in a position to identify a cult image for Room 71 from the corpus of objects retrieved therein, although we know from the inscribed ivory plaque that a statue was made for Tanit-Ashtart (Pritchard 1982). What we *can* identify is the existence of items which seemed to have served such a divinity (the amulets) placed on a 'special table'. More important are the terracotta statuettes representing the seated, pregnant woman with her right hand which rests over the distended abdomen. The posture of the head, slightly bowed suggests that this is a votary representing a female worshipper 'awaiting patiently the time of parturition' (Pritchard 1978: 145).[4] Another statuette represents a woman holding a stylized bird in her arms probably a

[4] An evolved example of this type from Sidon is shown in **PLATE 3b**.

representation of the worshipper in the act of making an offering to the deity. The seated woman playing a hand drum or tambourine indicates musical action, probably carried out as part of the religious ritual that took place here.[5] The whole assemblage of finds can be interpreted as an offertory or votive cache, and the small room, a small religious building, a chapel.

Sounding X Periods	Sounding Y Strata	Tyre Strata	Approximate Date
I	K	XVI	*ca.* 1550-1450 BC
I-II	J-H	XVI-XV	*ca.* 1450-1350 BC
III-IV	G	XV-XIV	*ca.* 1350-1275 BC
V	F	XIV	*ca.* 1275-1150 BC
VI	E	XIV-XIII	*ca.* 1150-1025 BC
VII	D	XIII-VIII	*ca.* 1025-800 BC
VIIIa-VIIIb	C-B	VII-I	*ca.* 800-350 BC
VIIIb-IX ?	B-A2	—	*ca.* 350-100? BC
X?	A1	—	*ca.* 100? BC-? AD

Table 3.5 Correlation between the strata of Areas X and Y at Sarepta and the strata at Tyre (Bikai excavations) with a tentative chronology.
(*source*: Khalifeh 1988)

[5] An example of this type from Kharayeb is shown in **PLATE 3d.**

3.2.5 The Astarte Cave, Wasta

Site visit: —

Reported: Renan 1864: 647-650

Published: Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948

Description and discussion. In his *Mission de Phenicie*, Renan (1864: 647-650) makes reference to a number of caves he visited with the duc de Luynes on the road from Sidon to Tyre, as 'grottes de prostitution', on account of inverted triangles incised on the walls, the *pudenda muliebria* reputedly seen by Herodotus (II, 106) in this same region (Renan 1864: 648-632, 662, plate 28). One such cave is found at Wasta.

A survey of the remains was conducted by the R. Mouterde in 1934 and 1947 and by P.A. Beaulieu in 1936. Their observations were published (Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948) alongside photographs and drawings of the graffiti. Unfortunately, however, a plan of the cave was not included. The cave is situated about 7 km. south of the Hellenistic necropolis at 'Adloûn and immediately to the north of the mouth of the Litani river, in an area of white limestone (**FIGURE 31**).[1] Entrance to the cave is through a rectangular doorway, down three steps into the western longitudinal side of a rectangular space (9 by 5-6 m.). The headroom measures about 2.50 m., but this is the result of raising of the floor level by pouring concrete during the Second World War. A 2 m.-wide bench skirts the W and S walls around a central area which is 2 m. deep and which blocks the approach to the E wall from the entrance. The S wall is decorated with graffiti and inverted triangles and into it a rectangular and an arched niche have been cut (**FIGURE 32**). Three rectangular niches were also cut into the E wall alongside several inverted triangles. To the N, Beaulieu and Mouterde speak of a grave separated from the rest of the complex by a pile of ashlar blocks. Next to the grave, incised in the wall was a Christian cross.

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[1] See Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 167); also Dunand & Duru (1962: fig. 1). The village of Wasta (or El Ouasta) can be easily located on the 1:100,000 map of Lebanon. Between the village and the coastline (between the 25 and 50 metre contour line) is an area labelled 'Caves'. A path from the Litani river

According to Beaulieu and Mouterde two cults took place in this cave sanctuary. During the earliest cult (*culte primitif*) a divine image of Aphrodite-Astarte was placed in the central niche on the E wall. In front of the wall there would have been a table for offerings placed in between two columns, and this area would have been the *cella*. A dedication (Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948: 6-10, Inscription 1) in Greek to Aphrodite by *Pimilkatos* or *Pimilkatros*, was incised above the niche flanking the central one to its left. In the same niche, the Frenchmen note traces of a stele in relief. At a second stage, the cave became the focus of a popular cult with triangles incised on the walls by worshippers. The triangles, accompanied by incised palm trees, palm leaves, and young personages, have been interpreted as fertility symbols. One triangle, is incised over the earlier Greek dedication (Inscription 1). Another eight inscriptions are known from this second phase (Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948: 10-16). The reading and interpretation of three (Inscriptions 2 (a Greek graffito), 4 (a semitic graffito), 9 (three Greek letters)) is difficult and doubtful. Others refer to dedicators who have a Phoenician theophoric name (*Ba'alakat* in Inscription 6; *'Abdtennau* and *'Abdsafoûn* in Inscription 3: see Milik 1954), a Greek name (Ειρηνη in Inscription 5), and an Egyptian name (Πισοιος in Inscription 7; Milik 1954: 11).[2] One inscription (No 8) (Rychkmans in Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948: 20) is in Safaitic, an Arabic dialect from the Transjordanian desert.

The nature of the dedications found on the walls of the cave has induced scholars to argue that this 'cave-shrine' was the site of a local, popular religion, and visited by travellers from different parts of the Near East (Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948: 15, 19; Grainger 1991: 77-78; Milik 1954: 11; see also Grottanelli 1981b: 113, Fantar 1986: 211 n. 471, and Lipinski 1995a: 423). Only one inscription (No 1) can be tentatively dated to the second century BC, since it mentions King Ptolemy, to be identified probably with Ptolemy IV of Egypt (Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948: 8). Wasta is not mentioned in recent research aids on the Phoenicians as a religious site (see **Table 1.1**).

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forks into two directions, one leading to nearby Kharayeb and the other to Wasta. This map was used as the base for **FIGURE 31.**

The only data we have to establish whether we are justified in describing the cave at Wasta as a religious site are the inscriptions on the walls, which clearly are of a dedicatory nature with one invoking the Greek goddess Aphrodite. If the site is taken in isolation nothing else provides evidence commensurate with a ritual interpretation, although the symbolism apparent in the inverted triangles is a plausible suggestion. Despite the care with which Beaulieu and Mouterde describe the cave, the reconstruction they give of the earliest cult with a divine image and a table for offerings is conjectural. The case for a religious ritual at this site, therefore, rests solely with the inscriptions.

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[2] Grainger (1991: 77-78) says that 'every dedicator has a Phoenician name'. This is not the case.

3.3 Kition (Larnaca), Cyprus

Kition is situated on the south coast of the island of Cyprus, on the western side of the large protected bay of Larnaca. South of Kition is the Salt Lake of Larnaka. The topography of this coastal plain has changed considerably since antiquity but a combination of ancient and modern documentary sources, and the distribution of archaeological remains have allowed a hypothetical reconstruction of the ancient city's extent, roughly corresponding to the limits of modern Larnaka (Nicolaou 1976: 9-51) (**FIGURES 33, 34**). It is assumed that in the first millennium BC the coastline was more inland than it is now, and that marshland existed to the N of the city-walls; the salt lake was also much bigger and open to the sea. The port of Kition has always been located to an area NE of the city, consisting of a small inlet reached via a navigable channel (Nicolaou 1976: 71-85, fig. 171; Yon 1990b: 964, n. 13 *contra* Gifford 1985). This has been confirmed by the recent discovery of late fifth-century BC slipways at the foot of the Bamboula Hill combined with a study of the local geomorphology (Yon 1991; 1994: 672-676, figs 52-53; 1995a: 122-128, figs 1, 3-4; 1995c: 454-456, fig. 4). The Bamboula Hill is an area of artificial high ground forming part of a low plateau which runs parallel to the present coastline (**FIGURE 33b**); the highest point is less than ten metres above sea level (see photos in Gjerstad 1937: figs 1-2). Excavations have confirmed this area to be the site of the ancient Acropolis of classical Kition, overlooking the port at its feet (Nicolaou 1976: 86-101, figs 19-24). North of Bamboula, right at the edge of the plateau is the area known as Kathari. The prehistoric and later cemeteries of the city of Kition are located to the NW, W and SW of modern Larnaka (Nicolaou 1976: 158-216, fig. 30).

Kyriakos Nicolaou (1976: 102-130, fig. 25) has gathered together most of the available information about alleged sanctuary sites that have been discovered in Kition (see also Caubet 1986, Wright 1992a: 110) (**FIGURE 33b**). These are: the sanctuary of Herakles-Melqart at Bamboula (Swedish Cyprus Expedition excavations in 1929-1930; Gjerstad 1937); the sanctuary of Astarte at Bamboula (Ohnefalsch-Richter explorations in 1879; Ohnefalsch-Richter 1893: 11); the temple-complex at Kathari (Cyprus Department of Antiquities excavations: *Kition Vi-iv*); the sanctuary of

Artemis Paralia outside the walls (examined by Ohnefalsch-Richter in 1879; 1893: 11, 314-318); the sanctuary of Eshmun-Melqart on Patsalos Hill outside the walls (excavated by Cesnola 1877: 55-57); the sanctuary at Kamelarka within the walls (identified by John Myres in 1894; 1897: 164-169); the sanctuary of Chrysopolitissa (discovered in 1939 and excavated by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities, unpublished); the sanctuary at the Lyceum (found during construction works in 1942: Nicolaou 1976: 114 n. 65); the sanctuary at Phaeromeni (discovered in 1942 during road leveling; Nicolaou 1976: 115 n. 68). Besides, the existence of another five sanctuaries is assumed from various Greek and Phoenician inscriptions found at Larnaca. To these we have to add the sanctuaries discovered at Bamboula by the French archaeological mission led by M. Yon, after Nicolaou's book was published (Caubet 1986; see below).

Of these alleged temple sites only three need interest us here (Heracles-Melqart; Eshmun-Melqart; Kathari), the remaining being essentially Greek (Artemis Paralia), or else are either known through scanty structural remains uncovered in the last hundred years, the plan of which was not published (Astarte at Bamboula; Kamelarka; Chrysopolitissa), or through the discovery of statuary unrelated to any building structures (Lyceum; Phaneromeni). Of the Phoenician inscriptions mentioned, one is of a funerary nature (Nicolaou 1976: 13.3) while the others are of unknown provenance and therefore devoid of an archaeological context (1976: 13.1, 13.2, 14, 14).

Information about the alleged sanctuary of Eshmun-Melqart is very scanty: Cesnola (1877: 55-56), the American consul to Cyprus, only reported that the temple stood on a conical mound and that its broken foundations and portions of the pavement consisting of large square slabs were found 3½ feet below the surface; he lamented that the foundations 'had been previously destroyed by stone diggers', while producing no plan of the remains. From a depth of 19 inches he recovered 21 fragments of white marble bowls and *paterae* with Phoenician inscriptions incised on the rims, which he lists and reproduces (1877: 441-442, nos 1-6, 10-23, 30, plates 9-12). The inscriptions, now preserved at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, are

dated to the fourth century BC (Teixidor 1976): on four (*CIS* I 16a, b (= Cesnola 1, 14), 23 (= Cesnola 10), 24) the Phoenician gods Eshmun-Melqart (*'šmnmlqrt*) can be read (Bonnet 1988: 324-326). The stereotyped formula *ybrk*, meaning to bless, on the vases suggests that the receptacles or whatever was in them were offerings to the gods. Further investigations at the site by Myres in 1894 failed to produce any architectural fragments, although he reported the discovery of another inscribed fragment of a white marble bowl and Attic Black-Glazed bowls inscribed with Phoenician letters (Myres 1897: 170-171). In conclusion, therefore, while the inscriptions are suggestive of ritual activity in connection with Phoenician divinities, we cannot on the basis of the available information be certain that the context to which they belong is a ritual one. The nature of the site at Patsalos Hill is uncertain.

3.3.1 Kition, Bamboula (Larnaca)

Site visit: —

Reported: Caubet 1984, 1986: 155-159; Yon 1977, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982a, 1985a, 1986b, 1988, 1990b, 1994, 1995c: fig. 4

Published: Gjerstad 1937

3.3.1.1 The Swedish Cyprus Expedition (E. Gjerstad)

Description. Stratigraphic excavations at Bamboula Hill were undertaken by the Swedish Expedition to Cyprus between October 1929 and April 1930 with the scope of obtaining 'an archaeological fixed point for the Phoenician colonisation of Cyprus'. A comprehensive report of the excavations (including stratigraphy, catalogue of finds, photos, plans, section drawings, etc.) was published by Einer Gjerstad (1937). The area investigated is shown in plan I of his report (**FIGURE 35b**). By noting the different strata, and what he called 'the natural lines of demarcation formed by the floors and floor-levels', Gjerstad was able to identify ten habitation periods (1937: 15, 18-26, figs 15-18) (**FIGURE 36**). **Periods 1-3** (Cypro-Geometric I - middle of Cypro-Archaic I) consisted of two walls [1], [2], belonging to a room. Gjerstad argued that there was 'no indication that the room formed part of anything else than a secular

settlement', noting that the fact that in successive periods the area was transformed into a sanctuary, afforded no proof that the same was the case in Periods 1-3 (1937: 18, fig. 16. 1). In **Period 4** (middle of Cypro-Archaic I - beginning of Cypro-Archaic II), a temenos was founded on the debris of the earlier settlement (1937: fig. 16. 2). The temenos consisted of a rectangular room [IV], measuring 4.00 by 1.90 m., bounded by walls [3], [4], [5], [6]. Entrance was through the N end of wall [5]. Gjerstad noted that although 'the finds do not give any clue to the purpose of these structures', he still thought that this was a sanctuary because the structures of the later Period 5 – 'of similar construction and plan' – formed part of a sanctuary. He claimed that the sanctuary of Period 4 was 'of the temenos type, with open votive and altar courts, and roofed-in cult-chapel (Room IV) [...]'. In **Period 5** (beginning of Cypro-Archaic II), new temenos walls were erected (walls [7A] and [8A]) with the base of a statue (1937: fig. 4, Cat. No. 560) built into wall [7A]; the feet were still preserved. Gjerstad argued that the presence and size of the sculpted feet suggest that this was the cult statue and that the related architectural remains formed part of a cult place (1937: 21, fig. 16. 3). In **Period 6** (late Cypro-Archaic II), a new wall [9] was added and the previous walls heightened [7B], [8B]. A rectangular altar [36] built of rubble and stone chippings was erected in front of the cult statue (1937: 21, fig. 16. 3). In **Period 7** (Cypro-Classical I), the area underwent changes and the earlier remains were covered over by a fill of earth. A rectangular space or room [IX] was built, delimited by a construction (called platform [34]) of rectangular limestone slabs, originally measuring about 7.70 by 5.50 m., and oriented E-W (**FIGURE 40b**). The floor of this room was cut through by a deep pit during Period 9 (see below; Gjerstad 1937: figs 17, 19) (**FIGURE 37**). Two altars were found here: one [37], consisting of a square limestone block, was found inside the E short side of the temenos, covered with ash and carbonized matter; the other [38], was a monolithic, moulded pillar, erected outside the platform close by the same side. In **Period 8** (Cypro-Classical II) another fill of earth about 0.95 m. deep, covered the remains of the earlier period. The architectural remains of this period consist of two altars [39] (ashlar blocks on a stepped base) and [40] (a monolithic block with moulded base border) (1937: figs 9, 10).

The sanctuary assumed for Period 8 was the last one in a successive of religious buildings, and in the next period (**Period 9**: Chypro-Hellenistic period), it was demolished and secular buildings erected. At this time, a rectangular pit with straight sides (measuring 7.70 by 5.50 m.) and a lower pit or an irregular rounded shape (1937: fig. 19, plans III-V) (**FIGURE 37**), were dug from the top level of the stratum of Period 8 down to the floor-level of Period 7, cutting through the floors associated with the buildings corresponding to these periods. From a layer of brown, silted clay, mixed with building debris of lime-mortar and stone (Layer 8) within these pits, Gjerstad uncovered hundreds of fragments of limestone statues and statuettes, some of which had traces of paint. He interpreted them as *ex votos*. Some of the statues were found crowded together along the S side of both pits, leading Gjerstad to infer the presence of wooden boards to act as support for the statuettes (1937: 11, figs 23-29). A stylistic study of the entire corpus of statuary revealed that the earliest statuettes belonged to Period 5; a *terminus post quem* was provided by the cutting of the pit in Period 9. Gjerstad (1937: 66) argued that the *ex votos* were constantly being shifted from one temple to the next. The statuary from Periods 5 – 7, together with those of Period 8, were finally deposited in the pit when the temple of Period 8 was destroyed. He explained that conclusive proof for this movement of statuary was given by the retrieval of a head (Cat. No. 576) from an undisturbed stratum of Period 8 which fitted a torso (Cat. No. 52) uncovered in the pit. The remains of a platform [35] found in the area, was interpreted by Gjerstad (1937: 66) as a marker for the buried statuettes: he suggested that it was laid as a border round the top of the refilled pit.

Einar Gjerstad (1937: 75) claimed that the temples were dedicated to the Cypriot variety of the Greek Heracles, the Phoenician Melqart – the city-god of Kition – as suggested by some of the sculptures retrieved from the pit which portray a personage dressed in a lion's skin and clasping a club in his right, raised hand (**PLATE 11a**).

3.3.1.2 The French Mission (M. Yon)

Description. Excavations undertaken by a French mission to Kition from the University of Lyons since 1976, and directed by Marguerite Yon, have had the primary objective to re-open the excavations where Gjerstad had located the sanctuary to Heracles-Melqart at the hill of Bamboula in 1929. The Bamboula area was divided into a grid, each square of side 10 m. Excavations were primarily (1976-1981, 1984-) conducted in two areas: area A to the north, in squares I-H/6-7 (B. Detournay, J. Calvet, A. Caubet, O. Callot); area B to the south, in squares H-L/3-5 (J.-F. Salles). Both areas include the limits of Gjerstad's earlier work (*cf.* Gjerstad 1937: plan I and fig. 15 with Yon 1985b: fig. 1; 1994: fig. 52, Caubet 1982: fig. 1) (**FIGURES 35a, 40a**). Excavations were extended northwards in 1985, in squares H-K/8-10 (see Yon 1994: fig. 52). The publication of the final report related to the sanctuaries has been announced after an agreement was reached with the Cyprus Antiquities Service (Yon 1990b: 962).

Phoenician sanctuary (*Sanctuaire phénicienne*): Area B (I-J/6)

The existence of a Phoenician sanctuary dating to the end of Cypro-Geometric III (850-725 BC) has been reported by Yon (1978: 918-919; 1981: 993; 1985a: 939; 1985b: 223; 1986b: 853; 1990b: 962; 1994: 672; 1995c: 449) but no plans of the remains seem to have been published to date. A good photo of the area is available (Yon 1985a: figs 100, 101). Yon's account (1978: 918) makes reference to excavations conducted in Area A, I-J/6 which uncovered the remains of two walls ([254]: 3.50 m. long, W-E; [259]: 2.50 m. long, N-S) built of regularly cut stone, 0.60 m. wide, at right angles to each other; the superstructure would have been of mudbrick. Against one of the walls, on the outside, a limestone 'monolithic altar' (*autel monolithe*) [258] was uncovered, 0.85 m. high (see Yon 1978: 919 fig. 90). Only a little material was retrieved which included White Painted and Bichrome III ware (1978: fig. 91). Yon claims that the sanctuary suffered a violent destruction as suggested by the layer of burnt material uncovered inside the building. In her first report, Yon noted that the discovery of the altar would suggest that this area was a religious place at the time of the Phoenicians' arrival in Kition. She was cautious, however, in classifying the remains: 'Certes, la rareté du matérial découvert ne permet

pas d'en dire plus sur la destination de ce bâtiment sacré (chapelle dans un temenos ouvert? temple?).' (1978: 918; also Caubet 1984: 108).

The excavations were resumed in 1984 and extended in 1989 by J. Calvet, confirming that the sanctuary consisted of a rectangular building [522] measuring internally 5.80 by 3.00 m.; the walls were 0.60 m. wide (Yon 1985a: 939).[1] It was open to the S and its floor had an absolute height of 2.40 m. Parts of a platform ([590], measuring 1.40 by 1.30 m., 0.40 m. high) built of ashlar blocks and rubble stones were uncovered beyond the entrance. The platform was interpreted as an altar (Yon 1990b: 962, fig. 84).[2] The religious nature of the building was reconfirmed in a subsequent report (Yon 1994: 672) which says: '[...] le plan, deux autels et des figurines attestent de son caractère religieux.' The building seems to have been extended eastwards in the eighth century by the addition of another room. Yon asserts that the recovery of figurines representing a woman with lifted arms (*déese aux bras levés*) and an altar, demonstrate the religious nature of the complex (1985a: 939, fig. 104; 1985b: 223; 1994: 672).

This outline is repeated by Caubet (1984: 118) and Bonnet (1988: 318) who also make reference to the figurines to support the sacred nature of the remains. Unfortunately, no plan has been published to allow us to match the results obtained by Gjerstad and Yon's. Wall [254] is shown by Caubet (1984: fig. 1), followed by an interrogation mark (**FIGURE 38a**), but nothing comparable is seen in Gjerstad's report (1937: fig. 15). His early walls (Periods 1-3) are [1] and [2] (**FIGURE 36b**) which do not seem to correspond to anything mentioned by Yon.

Archaic sanctuary (*Sanctuaire archaïque*): Area B (I-J/6-8)

This is the sanctuary built above the earlier religious building in the Cypro-Archaic period (*c.* 725-475 BC). The first campaigns have been reported by Yon (1979: 704; 1981: 993-994; 1982a: 724-725) and the preliminary results brought together in a useful article by Annie Caubet (1984) who included various plans of the

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[1] The external dimensions of the building, given walls of width 0.60 m., would be 7 by 4.2 m. These are the measurements given in **Table 4.2**; Yon (1990b: 962) gives them as 7 by 4 m.

[2] Yon (1990: 962) says that besides this altar [590] a smaller one was recovered in 1980. However, the report for the excavations undertaken in 1980 (Yon 1981) make no reference to such an altar. Her reference is presumably to the first altar [258] discovered in 1977 and reported in 1978 (Yon 1978: 918), mentioned above. Reference is again made to two altars in a subsequent report (Yon 1994: 672).

Cypro-Archaic sanctuary. Caubet also amalgamated the building phases from Gjerstad's excavations and those from the French Mission (**Table 3.6**). Work undertaken after 1984 was again reported by Yon (1985a; 1986b: 851; 1990b: 962-964; 1994: 672).

Caubet was able to identify four building phases for the sanctuary spanning the whole Cypro-Archaic period. In the **first phase** (*c.* 650 BC), a series of rooms [522], [523], [524] were built against a common wall [278] in a NNE-SSW orientation.[3] (**FIGURE 38a**) A square altar built of mudbrick [279] (measuring 2 by 2 m., 0.45 m. high) was uncovered above floor [245].[4] No objects were recovered from the vicinity of the altar but Caubet notes the discovery of a fragment of a goddess figurine with upraised arms [K.80.1630] and pottery from the destruction of this phase (*remblayage tassé de la destruction de cette phase*) (1984: 109, fig. 1; *cf.* Yon 1979: 704).[5]

In a **second phase** (*c.* 650-550 BC) (Caubet 1984: 109-113, figs 2-4; see also Yon 1979: 705; 1981: 993; 1982a: 724-725; 1985: 939), the sanctuary was demarcated to the south by a wall [289] built along a road [508] going W-E (**FIGURE 39**). Entrance was through a door in this wall. The sanctuary consisted of a paved portico [528] to the E, running N-S, and a central area which included a number of rooms [523], [524], [527], and a central space [526]. Wall [278] demarcates the complex to the W. The level of the new floor, of pounded clay or gravel, was found level with the top of the altar [279] from the previous phase. The installations in the central area [526] lying above its floor [293], included the following: a limestone trough [K.81.1464] found overturned; a clay platform [516] with a surface concavity filled with gravel, chalk and ash; a small pit with an ashy deposit containing a carnelian bead and a plate of a type known as Samaria ware (*ceramique dite "de Samarie"*); a limestone basin (KEF-714, Caubet 1984: fig. 3). In the middle of the room, an upright block was found mortised in a rectangular slab [509] set firmly in the floor. A terracotta figurine representing a horse [KEF-627] and an inscribed sherd with Phoenician letters was found in the fill (*remplissage*) of floor [526]. From this

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[3] In the reports the orientation is always given as N-S; but this is not the case (see Caubet 1984: figs 1-5).

[4] Caubet (1984: 109) refers to 'le sol 245 dans la pièce 524' and to 'l'autel 279 [...] posé sur le sol 245'. This is contradicted by what is reported by Yon (1986b: 851) as '[...] l'autel massif de brique 245'.

[5] No reference is made to this figurine in Yon's reports.

area, the discovery of Phoenician bichrome pottery was reported by Yon (1982a: 725, fig. 92, b). A stone anchor [K.81.1648] was found propped against the external wall of room [527], opposite the entrance. Other finds included two terracotta figurines from area [533], one [KEF-257] of which of the goddess type with upraised arms.[6] Caubet proposed that rooms [523] and [527] were chapels with a common courtyard [533]; the central, 'privileged' area [526] was probably roofed, with slab [509] possibly serving as a plinth for a roof-supporting pillar. Further excavations beyond wall [294] to the E in 1985, uncovered more remains with another entrance on street [508]. From here, Yon reported the discovery of fragments of terracotta figurines: horses, and goddesses with upraised arms (1986b: 851, fig. 85). In 1987 excavations were extended to the W (Yon 1988: 827), uncovering a complex of rooms (visible in 1988: fig. 66) with Cypriot and Phoenician pottery, animal bones, crucibles and slag, amphorae serving as containers for terracotta weights (1988: fig. 68). The discovery of terracotta figurines of the same type as those found nearby, suggested to Yon that this area formed part of the sanctuary.

In a **third phase** (*c.* 550-500 BC) (Caubet 1984: 114-115, fig. 5; see also Yon 1981), the walls from the previous phase were levelled, leaving only wall [289] to delimit the street and an open-area to the north (**FIGURE 38b**). Excavations here were hindered by the sondage from the Swedish expedition. The installations uncovered consisted of a "kiln" ("*foyer*") [284] from which fragments of pottery and five (or six) identical figurines were recovered,[7] and a low circular platform [297]. The pottery included plates of Plain White ware (Yon 1981: fig. 56, a). A fragment of a stone-anchor was also recovered. The mould-made figurines, about 7 - 10 cm. high, are of a votive nature, and represent what Yon (1981: 993, fig. 55) and Caubet (1982) call miniature Hathor stelae (*stèles hathoriques miniature*) after the similar scheme represented on the so-called Hathor capitals said to have come from Kition (Caubet 1982: figs 2-4; see Nicolaou 1976: 220, notes 30-31). Caubet (1982) suggested that the rites practiced in this area involved the throwing of vessels in the fire and the periodical moulding of clay figurines (also Yon & Caubet 1988: 32).

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[6] The discovery of more figurines in the 1989 excavation season was reported by Yon (1990b: 962) but the exact findspot is not given.

[7] Six are mentioned in Yon & Caubet 1988: 32, against the five listed in Caubet 1982: 237, fig. 3.

After the buildings from the third phase went out of use, a metre-deep layer of fill covered the area including the road. According to Caubet (1984: 116), the **fourth** and last **phase** (*c.* 500 BC) would correspond to altar [36] uncovered by the Swedish expedition.

1929-1930 Excavations	1976-1981 Excavations	Period	Date
Period 3	1st Archaic Phase	end Cypro-Archaic I	about 650 BC
Period 4	2nd Archaic phase	Cypro-Archaic II	650-550 BC
Period 5	3rd Archaic phase	Cypro-Archaic II	550-500 BC
Period 6	4th Archaic phase	end Cypro-Archaic II to Classical I	from 500 BC

Table 3.6 Comparing the phasing of the Swedish Cyprus Expedition with that of the French Mission to Kition Bamboula.
(*source*: Caubet 1984)

Classical sanctuary (*Sanctuaire classique*): Areas A & B (H-L/3-7)

Immediately S of the area where Gjerstad had uncovered the architectural remains corresponding to Periods 7 and 8, which included the platform [34] and the altars [37], [38], [39] and [40], the French Mission reported the discovery of an architectural complex which included a number of drainage channels capped with slabs, cisterns, and a large rectangular building (measuring 35 by 7 m.) consisting of a number of rooms built adjacent to one another (Yon 1978: 920; 1979: 704-705, fig. 76). In her report for 1978 and more specifically in the section entitled 'Sanctuaire classique', Yon (1979: 706) rejected Gjerstad's earlier interpretation that this area included a sacred peribolos wall (1937: 21) and thought that, 'il est trop tôt pour expliquer la fonction de ce bâtiment lié au sanctuaire [Gjerstad's]: peut-être faut-il penser à des salles de banquet?' The same doubt was expressed in subsequent publications (*cf.* Yon 1981: 996; 1995c: 451). At this time (end of the fifth century

BC), the slipways were constructed to the north of Bamboula Hill (Yon 1994: fig. 52; 1995a: fig. 4, a and b; 1997) (**FIGURE 40**).

In synthesis, Yon maintained that the sanctuaries of the Cypro-Geometric III and Archaic periods were dedicated to the Phoenician Astarte to be identified with the figurines with uplifted arms and the so-called Hathor plaques (1985b: 224; Yon & Caubet 1988: 33). She assumed that the cult to Astarte must have continued to exist after that time (in the Cypro-Classical Period) on account of the reference to a *Maitre de l'eau* and a temple to Astarte in an inscription reputedly found at Bamboula in 1879 (*CIS* I, 86 A and B; Yon 1982b). Despite expressing doubts on the function of the construction to the S of the sanctuary, she argued (Yon 1982b) that it was perhaps possible to speculate that the complicated layout of water channels begged an explanation other than an obvious utilitarian one, and that water played an important role in religious rituals. Yon argued that the cult of Astarte would have existed side by side with that of Heracles-Melqart which existed at least since the Cypro-Archaic Period (Gjerstad's Period 5; Caubet's Phase 3) (Yon 1985b: 224).

Discussion. After this lengthy treatment of the data from Bamboula, the issues we have to address are two: one, whether we are justified in seeing religious buildings here; two, what is exactly Phoenician at this site. With regard to the first issue, Gjerstad, Yon and Caubet present rather strong cases to suggest that the structures they uncovered and studied are suggestive of religious practice. But there are some problems. Gjerstad, for example, falls victim to a logical fallacy when discussing the room he uncovered in Periods 1-3: he argued that the fact that the area was transformed into a sanctuary in later times afforded no proof that the same was the case in Periods 1-3; so far so good, but a few lines down he insists that room IV of Period 4 served a religious function *because* the structures of Period 5 formed part of a sanctuary (see above). So really, we do *not* have sufficient data to justify seeing religious buildings during Periods 1-4. For Periods 5-8, a series of stone blocks or platforms were interpreted by Gjerstad as altars, and the *ex-votos* unearthed from a pit

dug in Period 9, had formed part of the cultic equipment inside these sanctuaries. As for the altars, only one square limestone block [37] in Period 7, was reportedly found covered with ash and carbonized matter lending some weight to the interpretation that it served as a table for placing offerings consumed by fire. Altar [38] (Period 7) is a monolithic moulded pillar placed on the same axis as altar [37]; altars [39], [40] (Period 8) are large structures: for all, a convincing alternative hypothesis to the ritual one proposed is difficult to ascertain. As for table [36] in Period 6, its interpretation as an altar or offering table becomes likely once its location, exactly opposite the base and feet of a statue in use from the previous period 5, is taken into consideration. Gjerstad's contention that this was originally a cult statue is lent weight by its large size and its location, and by considering it in the context of the other statuary recovered from the pit. The great quantity of anthropomorphic figures found within the pit is impressive: indeed, in view of what was discussed in CHAPTER II, they form the most important datum from Gjerstad's excavation at Bamboula. Here, we have the repeated occurrence of one specific element (statuary) in the archaeological record, and therefore evidence for redundancy. But the archaeological context of the statuary is a pit, dug purposely to contain them. The context is, therefore, a secondary one, but the good or restorable condition in which the statues were recovered, combined with Gjerstad's observation that some of the statues were neatly packed against the sides of the pit, would suggest – following the definition supplied in CHAPTER II – that we are dealing with a 'special' deposit, a cache, rather than simply a dump. What has to be established next is whether these statues, as Gjerstad contends, were used in the course of actions involving a transcendent being.

Our investigation is hampered by the fact that the statuary comes from a secondary context and therefore we cannot know whether it was employed together or not. This of course can be assumed given the fact that the corpus of statuary is a homogenous group, but nonetheless it is an assumption, complicated by the fact that the representations date to different periods. Gjerstad has no problems to identify the deity: the club and the animal skin draped over the head of a male personage are iconographic attributes associated with the Greek god Heracles and the Phoenician

Melqart (**PLATE 11a**).[8] But Yon (1986a: 148-151) has demonstrated that these attributes are not associated solely with Heracles (also Bonnet 1988: 320-321). On one occasion, Gjerstad (1937: 54) considers the position of arms and hands as a criterion to identify gestures of adoration, but in general he applies the label *ex votos* to all the statuary and overlooks some details.

If we use posture and gesture as criteria it is possible to suggest that certain figures are the images of worshippers bringing along offerings or gifts. Some of the statuettes portray a male figure with right arm lifted in a pose of adoration, and the left arm vertical along the side of the body, slightly advanced and holding a bird by the wings;[9] others, consist of a male statuette with left arm vertical along the side of the body and the right arm bent over the breast or hanging down alongside the body, holding a buck by its forelegs (**PLATE 11c**).[10] There are also two personages playing a double flute (**PLATE 11d**), and another holding a lyre in the left hand.[11] The rest of the statuary portrays figures in a standing, frontal position, with vertical arms hanging against the body. Two, however, are a representation of squatting figures, known as 'temple boys'.[12]

In this context, scale is not a helpful criterion to differentiate between cult image and votaries. The size of the statuettes varies between 0.35 and 0.66 m., whether they are draped in a lion's skin or grasp birds and bucks. The only exception is one reconstructed statue (Cat. No. 141, etc, plate 16, 3) depicting a Heracles figure which stands at a height of 1.23 m.[13]

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[8] The statuary representing Heracles is the following (Gjerstad 1937): 141, etc., plate 16, 3; 64+68+460, plate 22, 1-2; 24+590, plate 23, 1; 236, plate 23, 5-6; 234+250, plate 25, 1; 347+510, plate 28; 238, plate 31; 131+446, plate 34, 1-2; 400, plate 34, 3; 373, plate 34, 5; 260, plate 36, 1-2.

[9] The examples in the catalogue (Gjerstad 1937) are: 251+14, plate 24, 1; 242+253+284, plate 24, 2-3; 308+21, plate 20, 1-2; 144+237, plate 19, 3; 507+508, plate 34, 4; 135, plate 35, 7.

[10] These correspond to (Gjerstad 1937): 520+551, plate 30, 1-2; 393+404+454, plate 30, 3; 75+231, plate 31, 2; 246+573, plate 31, 3; 301, plate 33, 5-6; 30+20, pl;ate 35, 1-2; 417, plate 29, 1-2; 465, plate 34, 6; 551, plate 34, 8; 82+450, plate 29, 3. A buck is the male of the deer, goat, hare or rabbit.

[11] 26, plate 13, 1; 268, plate 13, 4; 44+321+327, plate 32, 1-2.

[12] 223, plate 35, 5; 259.

[13] This is the height reported in Gjerstad's catalogue (1937: 33), including the base. Yon (1986a: 150, caption to fig. 23) gives the height as 1.40 m.

With regard to the excavations of the French at Bamboula, interpretation is hindered by the provisional nature of the reports published to date, where even the number of figurines retrieved varies (see above). Without the publication of the whole assemblage of finds (which is being prepared), especially of the statuary, accompanied by an indication of their findspot, what can be said about the French excavations is limited. For the Cypro-Geometric period, the existence of a Phoenician sanctuary was justified on the basis of the plan of the building, the two altars and some figurines. As for the plan, no parallels were made with other sites and it is hard to justify seeing a religious building here solely on the basis of the plan (a rectangular room). The altars could classify as offering platforms but no other material was reported to have been found in association with them to lend weight to the supposition. As for the terracotta figurines representing a personage with uplifted arms (the head has not been preserved), we do not know exactly where or how many were recovered, and the identification with the Phoenician goddess Astarte is an interesting suggestion, but nonetheless hypothetical. The same holds for the Archaic Period where altars and figurines are used to justify seeing a religious complex here.

3.3.2 Kition-Kathari (Larnaca)

Site visit: —

Reported: Karageorghis 1968, 1970, 1971a, 1971b, 1972a, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1978, 1981

Published: Karageorghis 1976

Description. Excavations at the site of Kathari, in the northmost part of ancient Kition, were undertaken by the Cyprus Department of Antiquities between 1962-1981, directed by Vassos Karageorghis. In 1967 a complex of Phoenician temples was uncovered by the excavator in Area II adjacent to the city wall, built above earlier Late Bronze Age temples (**FIGURE 33b**). A comprehensive and exhaustive report of the pre-Phoenician levels has been published (*Kition V,i-iv*). A synthetic account of the Phoenician levels is available (Karageorghis 1976: 95-141) together with progress reports in the *Bulletin de Correspondence Hellénique* (Karageorghis 1968, 1970, 1971b, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975 1978), but the final excavation report, announced a while ago, 'is long overdue' (Karageorghis 1995).

At the end of the Cypro-Geometric I period (*c.* 1000 BC) the temple precinct of Kition was abandoned (**FIGURE 41**). Above a layer of alluvium and sandy soil resting on an earlier floor (Floor I), the Phoenician levels (Floors 3-1) were found (**Table 3.7**). This layer, uncovered throughout the site, represents its 150-year long abandonment until the arrival of the Phoenicians in the ninth century BC (Demas 1985: 163). Two buildings were revealed during the excavations corresponding to this period: Temple 1 (the 'Temple of Astarte') and Temple 4.

Temple 1 (the Temple of Astarte)

The Phoenicians built their temple by using the foundations of the earlier Late Bronze Age Temple 1. The new Temple 1 consisted of a rectangular building, measuring 35 by 22 m.;[1] its major axis was oriented ENE - WSW (Karageorghis

[1] The dimensions are taken from Karageorghis (1971: 166); Wright (1992a: 113) gives them as 31 by 22 m.; the dimensions are not available in Karageorghis (1976).

1971b: 381; 1976: fig. 18) (**FIGURE 42a**). The entrance was through two doorways, retained from the earlier temple: one at the E corner of the S wall, and the other in the N corner of the E wall; the latter led into an open rectangular courtyard (Temenos B) built above an earlier temple (Temple 2) and limited by the E wall of Temple 1 and S wall of Temple 2 (1976: 100, plate 49); the overall measurements are 23.60 m. north-south and 19.20 m. east-west. The entrance to Temenos B was in the NE corner; two pits, apparently for 'sacred trees', were found arranged symmetrically on either side of the entrance corresponding to Floor 3 (Karageorghis 1973; 1976: 100, plate 75). An altar from the previous temenos (Floor II) was retained after repair.

The W end of the rectangular edifice or temple consisted of a narrow rectangular room, the 'holy-of-holies', measuring 2.50 by 22 m. with three entrances from the long E side; the floor of this room was raised about a metre above the rest of the edifice so that stairs were needed to reach it. Karageorghis (1976: 98-99, plate 69) describes the main rectangular hall as a courtyard partly roofed with porticos on the N and S sides; the width of each portico was about 7 m. The roof of these porticos was supported on a double row of pillars, 28 in all, leaving a space in the middle of the edifice open to the sky of about 7 m. The wooden pillars were set in mortices in limestone bases found resting on Floor 3 (1976: plate 72); in order to dig the foundations for these bases, all the previous floors (and associated stratigraphy) within the edifice were removed down to bedrock. Karageorghis, however, remarks that the Phoenicians 'respectfully collected the few offerings which they found inside the old temple' and placed them in a shallow pit (*bothros* 1), outside the N wall (1976: 97). These offerings included two clay models of sanctuaries (*naiskoi*) and a terracotta figurine of a female goddess with uplifted arms (1976: plates 65-67).

On either side of the central entrance to the holy-of-holies were two rectangular pillars (one of which survives only partially) built of small ashlar blocks on all fours sides and filled with rubble: they measure 1.50 by 2.20 m. at their base and one is preserved to a height of 1 m. According to Karageorghis (1970: 251-252; 1976: 98, plates 70-71) these two pillars recalled the tripartite facade of the temple of Aphrodite at Paphos as it appears on coins of the Roman period, and the two pillars of

the Solomonic temple in Jerusalem. Karageorghis also noted the existence of similar pillars outside the holy-of-holies at the temple of Arad in the northern Negev. Near the pillars, a rectangular slab of local gypsum (*marmara*), measuring 2.16 by 0.86 m., with three perforations through it, was interpreted as a table of offerings (1970: 252, fig. 101; 1971a: plate 51; 1976: 98, plates 69-70) (**PLATE 12b**).

Lying on the earliest floor (Floor 3) of the main (temple) courtyard, and in the vicinity of the offering table, the excavators uncovered large quantities of 'Samaria ware' shallow bowls, with a fine red glossy slip and incised circles on their base. These bowls occurred together with quantities of charcoal and fragments of red slip ware jugs (1976: plate 76). A Samaria ware double bowl of unusual size (measuring 0.34 m. in diameter and 0.21 m. high) was also recovered (1976: plate 78). 'Not very far from the table of offerings', a dozen oxen skulls were lifted (1970: 255; 1976: 102-105, plates 79-81). When restored it became apparent that they were meant to be worn as masks because their back part had been cleaned of all projecting bones. Karageorghis argued that the presence of charcoal and ashes at this level would suggest that the temple suffered destruction by fire and that this occurred sometime about 800 BC, a terminus provided by the pottery chronology.

The deity worshipped inside the temple seems to have been the Phoenician Astarte. The evidence comes from an inscribed Phoenician red-slipped bowl recovered from the earliest floor of the temple (1970: 255; 1976: plate 83) (**PLATE 12b**). The inscription speaks of a man from Tamassos who shaves his hair and sacrifices sheep and a lamb in honour of the Lady Astarte (Masson & Sznycer 1972: 21). Indeed, large quantities of sheep bones were found in pits (*bothroi*) outside the great temple, mixed with ashes. Karageorghis (1976: 101) noted that when the temple was filled with offerings these were removed, placed in similar pits and sealed: two were found in the holy-of-holies (*bothroi* 3 and 4), one (*bothros* 9) within Temenos B (1976: plate 77), and another (*bothros* 12) near the table of offerings inside the temple. In the SW corner of the temple a large number of miniature bowls and juglets were found mixed with carbonized animal bones and ashes. The pottery consisted of black-on-red, black slip and red slip wares. An iron skewer and knife were lifted too.

These objects were covered by the subsequent floor of the temple, Floor 2a, which marks the second construction phase in the temple's history.

In this second phase, dated to the period 800-600 BC, the general layout of the temple is kept but the interior undergoes some modifications (Karageorghis 1976: 108-111, fig. 19) (**FIGURE 42b**). The two lateral entrances to the holy-of-holies were blocked, while a new colonnaded portico was built based on two rows of stone pillars. The table of offerings remained the same. The entrance to Temenos A was enlarged (measuring 5.40 by 4.20 m.) and a small room built against its N wall. A new altar, rectangular in shape with stone blocks on all four sides and an orthostat in the middle, was built near the NW entrance to the temple courtyard (1976: plate 86). An ivory hilt of a bronze sword and a faience figurine (height 0.07 m.) of a kneeling woman holding a kid or gazelle in her lap were lifted from the floor inside the temple; from outside the temple to the S come two bronze figurines of males wearing a kilt, one with a lifted arm (1970: 255; 1976: plates 89, XIX).

In a third phase (Floor 2; 1976: 111-114, fig. 16), dated to the period 600-450 BC, the NE entrance to the temple was blocked (**FIGURE 43a**). Benches (1.15 m. wide and 0.30 m. high) were built against the N and S walls, while the intercolumnations were filled with masonry. The floor was paved with pebbles and flat stones. A new table of offerings was installed in front of the two pillars beyond the holy-of-holies: it consisted of a large rectangular slab of local gypsum measuring 1.36 by 1.20 m.; it too had three perforations (Karageorghis 1970: 252, 254; 1971: 51). From a *bothros* (6) outside the temple, chippings of ivory were retrieved together with a bowl inscribed with the name of Melqart (1973: 652, fig. 84; 1976: 96) and terracotta statuettes representing pregnant women (1971b: 379, fig. 87). The temenos underwent significant architectural changes and was divided into small rooms; a workshop for the smelting of copper was installed. A rectangular well was incorporated in the area together with a series of hearths probably meant for sacrifices (1976: plate 93).

The architecture of the fourth and last phase of the temple, dated to the period 450-312 BC, is hardly known (Karageorghis 1976: 116-117, fig. 17). The excavator notes that the floor was not found and that the architectural plan is difficult to determine (**FIGURE 43b**); it is not known whether the original orientation was kept. Karageorghis says, however, that the central part of the temple was divided into six compartments (T.5-T.10). From the *bothroi* that correspond to this last phase, fragments of Attic red-figured vases and Attic black-glazed pottery were recovered, alongside statuary in limestone and terracotta in Greek style (1976: plates 96-101).

Temple 4

Temple 4 consists of a rectangular room (Room 36) to the E of Temple 1, built right above the foundations of the previous Late Bronze Age temple (Karageorghis 1974: 867-870; 1975: 83-835, figs 52, 53; 1976: 117-141, figs 18, 19). The internal space was divided into two (**FIGURE 42a**): a 'courtyard' measuring 12 by 5.50 m. and a 'holy-of-holies' measuring 3.50 by 5.30 m. The entrance to the temple was from the SW end of the W wall. A series of 'hearth altars' associated with successive floor levels (3, 3a, 2a, 2, 1) were uncovered, with the earliest one (Altar D) appearing to have incorporated the earlier Late Bronze Age altar (E).

From a large *bothros* (17) to the S of Temple 4 containing material corresponding to Floor 2a, 'Astarte type' figurines were recovered together with plentiful pottery of Cypriot Plain White ware, and a capital of local gypsum with carved papyrus leaf decoration. The figurines suggested to the excavator that the deity worshipped in Temple 4 was Astarte too.

Discussion. The 'great temple of Astarte' at Kition-Kathari is one of the better known examples of Phoenician religious architecture in the Mediterranean: Gjerstad (1979: 233) called the results of the excavations 'epochmaking' in his review of the Phoenicians in Cyprus. Unfortunately, however, only preliminary reports in French and a synthetic account in English are available, and although the

excavations were conducted with the stratigraphic rigour typical of Vassos Karageorghis' fieldwork, the story available is partial; the published plans do not have all the required details while the section drawings published in *Kition V, iv* do not have a commentary for the Phoenician levels illustrated. While the excavator is not always explicit about the criteria he adopts to define religious activity in Area II at Kition, the case he makes for seeing a religious building in 'Temple 1' has much to commend it. The most significant datum from the excavations remains the repeated occurrence of restorable pottery vessels and artefacts from various pits. Indeed, in ending his preliminary report for 1967, the year the first remains of Temple 1 were uncovered, Karageorghis (1968: 311) argued that the only way that the great abundance of small objects like scarabs, terracotta figurines, amulets and so forth, lifted from pits, be explained, was to see them as votive offerings that had been cleared away from the temple nearby; but an interrogation mark followed the word 'temple'. In the report for the 1969 season, the uncertainty is dropped: the rectangular construction immediately outside the inner room or holy-of-holies (the Greek *adyton* or Hebrew *debir*), which earlier had been referred to as an altar (1968: 308) was now seen as a pillar, one of a pair, recalling Jachin and Boaz built by the Tyrians for Solomon in his temple in Jerusalem (1970: 252-252).

By referring to the pits with the Greek word *bothroi* Karageorghis is assigning to the finds lifted from within a votive function: the description he gives, that most of the broken vessels from the pits could be restored (1976: 101), would suggest that this was indeed the case; ritual maintenance of the religious edifice appears to be the best way to explain the restorable sherds, in accordance with the definitions supplied in CHAPTER II. However, a cautionary note should be made at Karageorghis' conclusion that the intact miniature pottery recovered below Floor 2a belonged to a special deposit to be associated with a foundation ceremony. This is not necessarily so and an alternative reading is possible. I would instead argue that this *was* indeed a deposit associated with a ceremony but not one that marked the foundation of a new floor: it could have simply constituted the remains of a series of normal offerings, and hence a primary deposit, which were *not* cleared away when the new floor, 2a, was laid out. Likewise, the deposits of pottery and oxen skulls found near the gypsum slab on Floor

3 cannot, in my opinion, constitute a *bothros*, but are primary deposits, buried when the new floor was laid out.

FLOORS	PERIOD	IDENTIFICATION
I	Cypro-Geometric I 1050-1000 BC	Temples 1, 2 and 4
	haitus: layer of alluvium and sand	
3	Cypro-Geometric III c. 850-800 BC	Phoenician Temples 1 and 4
2a	Cypro-Geometric III – Cypro-Archaic I 800-600 BC	Phoenician Temples 1 and 4
2	Cypro-Archaic I – Cypro-Classical I 600-450 BC	Phoenician Temples 1 and 4
1	Cypro-Classical I – Hellenistic I 450-313 BC	Phoenician Temples 1 and 4

Table 3.7 Floor levels at Kition-Kathari, Area II.

(*source*: Karageorghis 1976: Table II)

A word has to be said about the identification of the inner, narrow room with the 'holy-of-holies', the *debir* of Solomon's temple. In his first publications, Karageorghis said that the divinity accompanied by two companions would have been placed here so that their image could be seen by those taking part in the processions inside the main hall (1976: 97; 1981: 89). This statement, however, does not explain why deposits from offerings (*bothroi* 3, 4) were allowed to accumulate here. In a subsequent publication, Karageorghis (1985: 249-251) returned to this issue after objections had been raised by Israeli archaeologists who saw the inner room as a store for offerings.[2] In the absence of any cult statues from the inner rooms of all pre-Phoenician temples at Kathari, he concluded that 'a specific type of structure or room for the permanent display of the image of the divinity, such as those identified in Near Eastern temples, is not characteristic of Cypriote temples', and that, 'it seems preferable at present not to designate structures or spaces in Cypriote temples which at best have only a superficial morphological resemblance to Near Eastern models, as

holy-of-holies'. These cautionary words could well be extended into the Phoenician phases of Kathari where images of the divinity have not been recovered from within the inner room; the published terracotta images thought to represent goddesses with uplifted arms come from *bothroi* outside this space (Karageorghis 1977a: 16-17).

In conclusion, the cases made for the buildings uncovered at Kathari to be of a religious nature are strong. We have to await the discussion in the next chapter to see whether they are typical or not of Phoenician religious architecture.

[2] See the comments of Amihai Mazar in Karageorghis (1981: 88-89).

3.3.3 Meniko, Litharkes

Site visit: Not possible; site was covered over after excavation

Reported: —

Published: Karageorghis 1977b

Description. Excavations were conducted in the summer of 1953 by Vassos Karageorghis, then Assistant Curator in the Department of Antiquities (Cyprus Museum), at the site of Litharkes, 1 km. to the SE of the small farming village of Meniko (**FIGURE 44**). The village lies near the copper mines of Mitsero on the northern slopes of the Troodos mountain range. The complex of rooms uncovered was interpreted by the excavator as a sanctuary, while some terracotta statuettes suggested that the cult was Phoenician. A comprehensive report of the excavation has been published (Karageorghis 1977b).

The alleged sanctuary consists of several rectangular rooms of varying size, and a number of open courtyards (1977b: 17-21, figs 2, 3, plates 1, 2) (**FIGURE 45**); the whole complex covers roughly a rectangular area measuring 14 m. (NE-SW) by 14.50 m. (SE-NW). The walls consist of small irregular river stones with a superstructure of mudbricks; the floors are of beaten earth. Along the SW are four rooms (A, B, C and D), three open to the NE, with a flat, elevated terrace along their back. Room A, perceived by Karageorghis to be the principal part of the sanctuary on account of the finds retrieved from within (1977b: 18), opens onto a western courtyard with a broad staircase of four steps. An inner courtyard separates the inner recess of Room A (which measures 2.70 by 2.10 m.) from the western courtyard; a small enclosure is found in the corner of the inner courtyard to the W, possibly to contain sacred trees (1977b: 23). Entrance to the western courtyard is from the NE, flanked by benches (0.20 m. high, 0.40 m. wide) on the inner sides of the walls. A triangular patch of burnt floor and ashes in the NW corner was interpreted as a hearth (Hearth 1). To the SE of the inner courtyard is Room B, with a lateral entrance, undoubtedly forming part of the same complex as Room A, perhaps as a store-room for ex-votos. Room E in the extreme N corner of the complex may have served as a house for the

priest or as a general store-room. A staircase separates Room B from another room, C (measuring 1.40 by 1.80 m.), further to the SW. Entrance to Room C is from the eastern courtyard to the NE through a slabbed threshold. A patch of burnt soil and ashes on the floor of the eastern courtyard was taken to be a second hearth (Hearth 2). A room, D, added at a second building phase, was thought to have served as a store-room for the adjacent Room C (compare plans in 1977b: fig. 2).

A rich corpus of terracotta figurines and vases were lifted during the excavation. Karageorghis noted that material was found scattered everywhere with the figurines and pottery mostly in fragments; pottery joins were also possible from sherds one or more metres away. The majority of figurines, however, were confined to well-defined spatial units, found piled in four layers in Room C (1977b: fig. 6.3-6, plates 4-5) (**FIGURE 46**), in the enclosure attached to the inner courtyard of Room A (1977b: fig. 6.1-2), and on the floor of the rectangular recess of Room A (**FIGURE 47**). The latter included a terracotta statuette representing a bearded and horned figure with pointed animal's ears seated on a throne (height: 0.185 m.; 1977b: Cat. No. 1, plates A.1, 6.1; see figure in Moscati 1988a: 106) together with two painted terracotta incense burners (*thymiateria*) (height of stands: 0.38 cm., 0.366 m.; 1977b: Cat. Nos 21-22, fig. 7, plates A, 12) and another of soft limestone (total height: 0.466 m.; 1977b: Cat. No. 101 + 102, fig. 7, plates A, 12). The terracotta stands would have been topped by double bowls and a lid with the inner bowl serving as a holder or burner for the incense. Numerous examples of such bowls were in fact recovered during the excavations (1977b: fig. 8). Karageorghis identified the enthroned bearded figure with the Phoenician god Baal-Hamman (or Baal Hammon), corresponding to the Libyan ram-god Ammon (1977b: 35-36). Karageorghis noted that the presence of the incense stands found in association with the statuette in Room A would allow the identification of the enthroned figure with the god of *hammanim*, the perfume altars, following a generally accepted etymology of the name Hamman or Hammon (1977b: 44 n. 6). Moreover, incense burners on stands appear placed in front of enthroned personages, taken to be deities, on Phoenician seals from Cyprus and the Levant (1977b: fig. 17.4). The presence of a terracotta statuette representing a ram (1977b:

38, Cat. No. 20, plate 10.20) and of a votary carrying a lamb (1977b: Cat. No. 91, plate 11.91) would emphasize the association of Baal-Hamman and the ram.

Other objects worthy of note were lifted from other parts of the religious complex (**FIGURE 47**). These included an ovoid stone of andesite found on the floor of the western courtyard (max. diameter 28 cm.; 1977b: 23, Cat. No. 108, plate 5.6). Karageorghis does not exclude the possibility that this stone could have been a cult object, noting that an exact parallel was found in the sanctuary at Ayia Irini in Cyprus close by an altar whence it had tumbled down (1977b: 42). Statuary and pottery were also recovered from four successive layers in Room C, the chapel (1977b: 23-24, fig. 6.3-6, plates 3.1, 4). Lying on top of these layers Karageorghis lifted a slab of soft limestone (height 1.18 m.; 1977b: 41-42, Cat. No. 107, plate 5.5) interpreted as "horns of consecration", which would have fallen from a pedestal when the sanctuary was abandoned. In the first layer flat stones formed a bench against the SW wall of Room C (**FIGURE 46**), while flat stones arranged in a semi-circle were built infront of the bench. In layer 4, a small circular stone enclosure was found in the NW corner containing vases and a lamp (1977b: fig. 6.6). The finds, or votive offerings, catalogued from Room C and for which the exact findspot was recorded, included pottery and both terracotta and limestone statuary. The pottery included open and closed forms: juglets of Plain White ware (1977b: Cat. Nos 54, 59, 65-70, 73, 74), a double bowl (Cat. No. 27), a *kernos* of clay (Cat. No. 45, fig. 10.45), a bowl-shaped lamp (Cat. No. 42), a bowl of coarse ware (Cat. No. 54) and a small cup of red slip ware (Cat. No. 59). Terracotta statuary included: a fragment of a human figure standing in an upright position (preserved height, half of original, 0.27 m.; 1977b: Cat. No. 10, plate 7.10), a clay model of a quadriga (height 0.18 m.; Cat. No. 12, plate 7.12), a fragmentary clay model of a biga (preserved height 0.115 m.; Cat. No. 13, plate 8.13), and a fragmentary hollow terracotta representing a horse and rider (height 0.42 m., Cat. No.15, plate 8.15). Of limestone was a fragment from the middle part of the body of a limestone statuette of a standing male figure (preserved height 0.19 m., Cat. No. 92, plate 9.92).

The building complex at Meniko was dated on the basis of the Cypriot Plain White ware jugs and bowls retrieved within to the Cypro-Archaic II period, starting at about 650 BC and ending not later than about 550 BC. The statuary would also fall into this time bracket although a date in the first half of the sixth century BC is favoured (Karageorghis 1977b: 44).

Karageorghis (1977b: 21) concluded that the sanctuary at Meniko, 'with its two chapels [Rooms A, C] and courtyards, all within a *temenos* enclosed by a *peribolos* wall, constitutes the most compound rural sanctuary, recalling in some way the sacred area of Kition, though on a much smaller and more modest scale.' Karageorghis held that the Phoenicians who had penetrated as far as Meniko in order to control the copper mines of the region, would have introduced their own god in a local, prehistoric milieu (1977b: 45).

Discussion. Meniko has no entry in some research aids on the Phoenicians, and is omitted from a discussion of Phoenician and Punic sanctuary sites (**Table 1.1**). Karageorghis refers to the site on several occasions and also postulates that the 'horns of consecration' could be identified with Tanit (1988: 162). Recently, however, he fails to mention the site in a review of past archaeological work related to Phoenician Cyprus (Karageorghis 1995). The ideas expressed in the published report have been followed closely by a number of scholars. G. R. H. Wright (1992a: 261, 270) talks of Meniko as a rural sanctuary to Baal Hamman, for metal workers, and notes (1992b: 271) that the building complex manifests the diagnostic features of enclosure wall, altar and walled compartment for sacred trees, present at contemporary temple sites at Kourion and Ayia Irini in Cyprus. In a recent review of the Phoenicians in Cyprus, Baurain & Destrooper-Georgiades (1995: 619) refer to Meniko as a sanctuary to Baal Hammon and Tanit. Muhly (1986: 360), like Michaelidou-Nicolaou (1987: 337), refers to Meniko as a 'real Phoenician cult sanctuary' with its cult of Baal Hammon. In a discussion of terracotta production in Cyprus, Bisi (1989: 257-258) refers to Meniko in her discussion of representations of Baal Hammon, while Vandenabeele (1986: 353-354; 1989: 266) notes that the Baal statuette from the sanctuary of Meniko

illustrates the Phoenician influence on the local terracotta production. Markoe (1990: 118) argues that the sanctuary at Meniko-Litharkes attests to the establishment of a Phoenician cult centre in north-central Cyprus, while Reyes (1994: 219) notes that the plan of the rustic structure at 'Meniko-Limassol [*sic*]' where the statue of the Phoenician god Baal Hammon was found, is not particularly distinctive architecturally and suggests that in Cyprus Phoenician cults were simply incorporated into existing rural sanctuaries.

Karageorghis makes a good case for interpreting the complex of buildings as a sanctuary, but it is important to rehearse the case here. The recovery of so many figurines and statuary is an important datum from the site, and the repeated occurrence of this item in the archaeological record is immediately discerned. Following on what was discussed in CHAPTER II, redundancy is usually the first step in inferring religious ritual from material remains. But the association of materials has to be interpreted in terms of formation processes. Unfortunately, we cannot pin down the exact distribution of all the pieces and fragments, since Karageorghis notes only the field numbers of a sample, confined to Room C and the Enclosure in Room A. It is, therefore, difficult to say with a degree of certainity whether the statuettes lifted from Room C constitute primary or secondary deposits. Karageorghis's remark that the material was found scattered seems to be correct, and is corroborated by the fact that some of the fragments assigned to different layers within Room C formed part of the same statuette.[1] It is tempting to see the bench or platform built against the back wall of Room C, right opposite the entrance, as a facility for the deliberate display of the statuettes, from which they had collapsed. But we have no clear answer. As for the inner recess of Room A, Karageorghis does not provide a drawing noting the distribution of whatever was found within. He only says that there were some objects 'on the floor of the rectangular recess of Room A' and that the latter 'included the

[1] Cat. No. 45 is composed of fragments with field numbers 22, 43, 73: the first was lifted from the third layer in Room C and the remaining two (43 and 73) from the first layer. Also Cat. No. 15, composed of three fragments with field numbers 56, 29, 76: the first two were lifted from the first layer in Room C, whereas the third (76) was lifted from the third layer. Karageorghis does not define the use of the term "layer" in connection with Room C (1977b: 23-24), and the section drawing (E-E') (fig. 5.1) does not help because the layers encountered are not shown. The joins of terracotta fragments seem to suggest, however, that the layers here were arbitrary, made in order to allow the proper horizontal exposure of the material before this was drawn, numbered and lifted.

terracotta figure of Baal-Hamman [...], the two terracotta *thymiateria* [...] and the limestone *thymiaterion* [...]' (1977b: 23). Given the fact that the objects were found *on* the floor and that they were recovered intact (or were easily restorable), the suggestion can certainly be made that they formed part of a primary deposit.

Taking the site as a whole, it is clear that objects of note found their way here. They mostly include standing figures in a frontal position (Cat. Nos 2, 3, 4): one represents what appears to be a warrior holding a shield hanging from a strap over his left shoulder (height: 0.15 m.; Cat. No. 9, plate 6.9), and another represents a personage holding a lamb (height excluding head: 0.18 m.; Cat. No. 91, plate 9.91) There are also two terracottas representing a horse and a rider (Cat. Nos 14, 15; plate 8.14, 8.15), and two intricate terracotta pieces representing horse-drawn chariots on a rectangular base (Cat. Nos 12, 13; plate 8.12, 8.13). Representations of the bull occur more than once (Cat. Nos 17 (height 0.31 m.), 18 (height 0.345 m.), 19 (height 0.175 m.)), and one example sticks out (height of bull: 0.285 m.; Cat. No.16, plate 10.16). It shows a bull flanked by two small, identical human figures, in frontal position with their left foot forward, their left arms down, and the right arm, with a clenched fist, bent up against the chest (**FIGURE 47**). There is also a representation of a ram (height 0.19 m.; Cat. No. 20, plate 10.20).

Karageorghis assumes that the corpus of statuary constituted votive offerings to Baal Hamman. That the statuette of the enthroned bearded figure from the rectangular recess of Room A could represent the object of worship, the cult image, is conceivable. The ram's horns and animal ears attached to the head would classify the personage as a composite figure, not wholly anthropomorphic, and pertaining to a mythical, divine world. No other representation from Meniko has this attribute. Moreover, the bearded figure is the only example of an enthroned figure, probably an attribute of power, since all the other representations depict personages standing or on horseback. Karageorghis does not mention other statuettes from the inner recess, so we may conclude that the enthroned figure, despite its small size (height: 0.185 m.),

had no rivals for attention.[2] The incense burners, too would classify as cult equipment: both their size and elaborate painted decoration mark them out from the rest of the pottery recovered from the site, while their use would be consonant with a ritual interpretation (**FIGURE 47**).

[2] Karageorghis explains away the diminutive size by recalling that cult statues in Cypriot sanctuaries are usually small, compared to the statues of votaries or worshippers (1977b: 35, n. 7).

3.4.1 Kommos, Crete (Greece)

Site visit: —

Reported: Shaw 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1989

Published: —

Description. In 1976, Joseph W. Shaw representing the University of Toronto and the Royal Ontario Museum, Canada, started excavations at the site of Kommos situated along the shore of the Mesara Plain in southern Crete (**FIGURE 48a**), under the auspices of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, with the cooperation of the Greek Archaeological Service. Excavations are still underway in three areas of the site which was an important seaside settlement with large ashlar buildings in the Minoan period. These areas are from N to S: the Hilltop Houses, the Central Hillside, the Lower Hillside (or Greek Sanctuary area). During the fourth season of excavations (24 June - 24 August 1979), Shaw reported the discovery of a "tri[-]pillar shrine", a 'most curious and important structure', under the floor of a Greek temple (Temple C = Room A2) built on the Lower Hillside (Shaw 1980: 229-237, 245-248, figs. 8 and 10). Further work the following year uncovered the Iron Age temple (Temple B) of which the shrine formed part and the remains of an another temple (Temple A) beneath its floors (Shaw 1981: 230-241) (**FIGURE 48b**). Shaw could not find Cretan parallels for the tri-pillar structure uncovered at Kommos and, despite being cautious in defining the nature of Phoenician presence on this site in the comprehensive preliminary reports which he promptly published (Shaw 1980, 1981, 1982, 1984), he concluded: 'Its appearance and certain historical and archaeological indications suggest that it may have been inspired by Phoenicians shrines, if not set up by Phoenician seafarers visiting Kommos.' (Shaw 1989: 165, 182; 1987). A final report (*Kommos IV = The Greek Sanctuary* edited by Joseph Shaw and Maria Shaw) has been announced (Shaw & Shaw 1993: 189).

The building remains referred to as Temple B which are pertinent to this study, are composed of an elongated room, oriented roughly WSW-ENE, open at the E end with a stone pillar placed in the doorway, roughly on axis, and presumably served as

support for a roof (**FIGURE 49**).[1] On removing areas of the floor of Temple C, excavations revealed parts of the W wall (0.72 m. wide) including both its corner stones, and the NE corner of the N wall (0.80 m. wide) which was flanked by a platform or bench 0.44 m. wide to the south. No bench seems to have flanked the E wall. The SE corner of the S wall was not recovered and seems to have been lost, but a bench is nonetheless assumed by the excavator (Shaw 1981: 233). The position of the S wall was confirmed in 1981 (Shaw 1982: 189 note 71). The overall dimensions of the room can be discerned from the remains: 8.08 by 6.40 m. (internal dimensions: 7.28 by 4.80 m.) (Shaw 1981: 233; 1989: 167 fig. 3). The first sloping floor (equivalent to Phase 1) was composed of hard-packed earth, even with the bottom of the bench blocks. The tri-pillar shrine was set even with the first floor, placed about two-thirds of the way back from the E entrance and along the axis of the room (Shaw 1981: 251 note 131). The shrine is composed of a reutilised, roughly triangular, sandstone block (0.75 m. by 0.86 m., 0.33 m. high), found covered with ash. Three upright, sandstone pillars were secured in mortises cut into the block by tenons in their lower end (**FIGURE 50**). Two of the pillars (C1 and C2) taper upwards and C2 has a maximum height of 0.35 m.[2] None preserved any trace of paint on discovery but the middle pillar had a rectangular cutting on its eastern face (1980: plate 65 a). Another feature associated with this floor level (Phase 1) included a rough hearth bordered by slabs placed east of the shrine along the major axis of the room (Shaw 1981: 233). Ash and numerous bones were found inside the hearth, together with a number of finds. These included a burnt faience bowl, what might be a bronze votive shield, two fragments of animal figurines (including a bull), and a miniature bowl. The remaining feature inside Temple B consisted of 'the base of a charred wooden pillar or tree, or, more likely, an oval wooden bowl' (Shaw 1980: 233-234, note 61, figs 8 and 10, plate 63 b; 1989: 170-171) set into the floor behind the tri-pillar shrine, even with the top of its triangular slab. Shaw (1989: 181) dates this first phase of

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[1] Shaw claims (1982: 186) that the orientation of Temple B (and A beneath it) was dictated by that of an earlier Minoan building. However, he considered it significant that the people of Kommos 'chose to leave the building open on the east, probably so that it would face the rising sun'.

[2] The dimensions of the pillars as given in Shaw (1989: 168 fig. 4) are the following: C1 - 0.125 m. wide by 0.145 m. long by 0.20 m. high, C2 - 0.24 by 0.15 by 0.35, C3 - 0.20 by 0.14 by 0.35. The respective mortises in the block measured: C1 - 0.13 by 0.153 by 0.058 and C2 - 0.13 by 0.115 by 0.045; the measurements for C3 could not be ascertained.

Temple B to the period circa 800-760 BC, basing himself on Late Geometric black-glazed cups (see also Shaw 1989: 165-166 n. 2).

When the floor outside the temple rose gradually, a retaining wall was built in the doorway as a temporary measure, until the floor level inside the room rose by an accumulation of ash, sherds, slabs, earth and much bone. These were visible to the excavators as dozens of horizontal layers (Shaw 1981: 235). The hearth was raised by adding more rough stones (forming Hearth 2) (**FIGURE 49**), while a shield made of bronze on a wooden and leather framework, 0.69 m. in diameter, seems to have been placed behind the pillars on the shrine, propped up by a slab set into an irregular depression in the base. The shield was reconstructed by Shaw from fragments of circular bronze sheets decorated with concentric grooves that form bands, found scattered around the pillars (1980: 235, plate 65 d; 1981: 235 n. 77). A bronze figurine of a horse was also found positioned between the two southern pillars (C1, C2), and a fine Egyptian faience figurine of the war-goddess Sekhmet was placed on top of the horse (Shaw 1980: 233-234, plates 62 d and e, 64). Other finds included another faience figurine (perhaps of Nefertum, son of Sekhmet) found between the two northern pillars (C2, C3), a figurine of a bronze bull found west of the central pillar, and a bronze disk north of the triangular slab, probably a miniature bronze shield (Shaw 1980: 235, fig. 10, plate 65 b, e). This set-up marked what appears to be the second phase of Temple B (Shaw 1989: 171),[3] which is dated to the second half of the

[3] It is not altogether clear from the published preliminary reports whether the second phase actually corresponds to a second floor level, but this can be safely assumed from various indications. At one point, Shaw discusses the establishment of a floor at a 'third major level' (phase 3) (1981: 235), without however making an explicit reference to a second major level a few lines up. The fragments of bronze which belonged to the shield were found between and around the three pillars, 'at the level of the later floor' (Shaw 1989: 172). The sounding made in 1979 near to the south wall of Temple C revealed a second floor level at the same height as the top of the triangular block into which the pillars were set (Shaw 1980: 236). But it is important to note that comparing absolute heights is risky because the floor levels of Temple B are sloping by about 0.20 m. to the SW, perhaps as a result of settlement (Shaw 1981: 233 note 75). The text is not clear as to whether a floor level was discovered even with the top of the triangular slab (+4.90 m..) when the sondage was carried out in 1979 (Shaw 1980: 233-234, fig. 10; also Shaw 1989: 171 n. 5 on the cramped working conditions within the sounding). However, figure 8 in Shaw (1980: 224) includes two sections which show a 'floor' at +5.08 m. captioned 'votive offerings on floor', on which a hearth (Hearth 3) was laid (therefore, this is floor 3 = phase 3). Other levels exist at +4.82 m. and +4.62 m. but these are not annotated. They are probably equivalent to floor 2 and floor 1 respectively. Shaw (1989: 168 fig. 4) shows an elevation of the reconstructed tri-pillar shrine with shield during the second phase. He also includes a dotted line which presumably depicts the floor level, indicating therefore, that at least *part* of the triangular base for the pillars was indeed visible (**FIGURE 50**).

eighth century BC (Geometric period) on the basis of the bronze bull and horse (Shaw 1980: 235-236). Moreover two flasks popular during the Early Orientalizing period were found (Shaw 1981: 240). Outside Temple B to the east, belonging to this phase, a large altar (Altar U) filled with thousands of burnt bones was uncovered (Shaw 1982: 190, plate 56). It was made of slabs and measured 1.50 m. (south), 1.35 m. (east), 1.74 m. (north), and 1.47 m. (west). About 22 Corinthian vessels mostly used for pouring and drinking were recovered from the founding level of the altar. The altar remained in use until about 600 BC.

In its third phase during the 7th century (Shaw 1981: 240), the floor of Temple B gradually rose again covering the wooden "bowl" and the bench (**FIGURE 49**). Only the upper parts of the pillars remained visible and these were incorporated into the western side of a hearth (Hearth 3) found filled with bone and ash, and a long piece of encrusted iron (Shaw 1980: plate 62 f, g). A similar piece was found outside. A clay floor (which must be the one visible in Shaw 1980: fig. 8 at level +5.08 m.) extended in all directions around Hearth 3. West of the hearth, 'in the clayish layer' the archaeologists recovered a 'ritual deposit of unusual nature'. This consisted of a small amount of fine pottery, mostly cups, dating to the 7th century BC (Subgeometric), many seashells, a bronze and a silver ring, a few faience beads, a fossilized oyster, and numerous fragments of a bronze shield. Shaw was of the opinion that these bronze fragments, already discussed above, were 'most likely to be associated with the level immediately below' (Shaw 1980: 231). Another hearth (Hearth 4) was built contemporary with the offerings or 'perhaps a bit later', to the SE, on the axis of the room. It was rectangular (the interior measured 0.94 by 0.88 m.), built of fine slabs set on edge with a carefully smoothed clay bottom surface and found filled with ash and bone (Shaw 1981: 235). This last floor of Temple B was found overlaid with small groups of stones, sandy earth and slabs. The builders of Temple C laid their floor on a thick layer of stone chips accumulated on the previous floor during a haitus of about 200 years.

Limited soundings beneath the lowest floor and the bench of Temple B revealed 'enough architecture and floors' to prove the existence of another building,

Temple A which spanned the period ca. 925-800 BC (Shaw 1981: 236-238; 1989: 165). Moreover, Shaw claimed (1981: 236) that there was 'sufficient artifactual evidence to conclude, independent of information about the upper buildings, that it too was a place for worship'. It is difficult to define the extent of the remains of Temple A but it seems that the width (N-S) is quite similar to B's (Shaw 1981: 237 n. 81). The earliest floor was of packed earth. Above it lay a second floor of tamped earth. On the second floor, but outside the building, the excavator recovered pottery of the Protogeometric period, a leg of a terracotta bull figurine, and a bronze arrowhead. Shaw (1981: 238) presumed that such arrowheads were 'votive gifts'.

Discussion. Since the publication of the intriguing shrine within Temple B, scholars seem to have accepted Phoenician religious activity at Kommos. Despite the fact that the site has no separate entry in two research manuals published recently (**Table 1.1**), Temple B is seen as 'a Phoenician cult place', '[...] aimed at providing religious facilities for Phoenician seafarers en route westward' (Negbi 1992: 609), while Kommos is not considered a permanent base or settlement of the Phoenicians (Moscati 1993c: 88). What can be classified as Phoenician at Kommos are the ceramic fragments (over 200) of Phoenician amphorae from the site (Shaw 1989: 181-182, n. 67 and references therein). Unfortunately, the distribution by phase of this pottery is still awaiting publication but Shaw points out that only a few fragments were found in the soundings made within the temples, while most came from the dumps; the link between these two different stratigraphic units was established on the basis of potsherd joins (Shaw 1989: 182 n. 69). A further consideration of the nature and extent of the Phoenician presence at Kommos rests entirely on the study of the tri-pillar structure within Temple B (Phases 1, 2). This has been done in an exemplary way by the excavator himself who defends the religious nature of the tri-pillar structure and the building by going through the steps outlined in CHAPTER II. Once a utilitarian function for the three pillars is considered and eliminated (Shaw 1980: 234, 246; 1989: 171), Shaw goes on to demonstrate the remarkable similarities that exist between the tri-pillar structure at Kommos and the depictions of pillars on funerary stelae from the Punic West (Shaw 1989: 176-180), an approach already followed by

others (especially, Bisi 1991: 230). To prove the religious nature of the installation, Shaw has to look outside Kommos to argue his case. The remains which would supply the information discussed in CHAPTER II are limited. Here we have hardly any evidence for redundancy suggestive of repeated action, other than the bone remains lifted from the hearths and the exterior altar which all belong to the tails and/or feet of goats and sheep (Shaw 1989: 165). In itself this is an important datum for such bone remains do not belong to the meat-bearing parts of an animal's body which would be common in a domestic context. Although most portable material was retrieved from the dumps located outside the building (Shaw 1981: 238-241), we can recognise primary deposits in the figurines found in close proximity to the tri-pillar structure (Temple B, Phases 1, 2). Shaw's stratigraphic excavations allow us to assign findspots to the figurines, and their distribution shows a marked association with the three pillars.[4] Placed on the major axis of the room, flanked by benches, the tri-pillar structure forms a focal point for whoever enters the room from the door. Taken by itself though, and if a highly sceptical position is adopted, the tri-pillar structure cannot be seen convincingly to belong to a religious context. A stronger case is only made, as Shaw has done, when the installation at Kommos is compared to pictorial representations of tri-pillar shrines from Punic sites, even though these belong to a later date.

[4] The only problem seems to be with assigning the bronze fragments of a shield to phase 2 when they were actually retrieved from a phase 3 layer (see above, Shaw 1980: 231).

3.5.1 Tas-Silg, Malta

Site visit: Participation in excavations in July 1996, 1997, 1998

Reported: *MM 1963-1970*; Ciasca 1976-1977, 1993

Published: —

Description. The hill of Tas-Silg, named after a chapel situated on its SE slope dedicated to "Our Lady of the Snows", lies to the NE of Marsaxlokk Bay in the SE of the island of Malta (**FIGURE 51**). The site is located on the hill, almost midway between the broad isthmus of the Delimara peninsula, which juts southwards into the sea to form the eastern extent of Marsaxlokk Bay. The asymmetrical peninsula has cliffs to the W and an indented eastern coast where the limestone beds dip gently eastwards forming a number of headlands. The western extremity of the peninsula is steep-too and precipitous, culminating in a bold white cliff at Il-Biez, becoming more open with sweeping slopes northwards below Tas-Silg. A modern road cuts the site in a northern and southern area.

Eight annual excavation campaigns were carried out at Tas-Silg between 1963 and 1970 by an Italian Archaeological Mission to the Maltese Islands set up in the spring of 1963 by Sabatino Moscati who at the time directed the Institute of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Rome.[1] Work in the field was directed by Antonia Ciasca. Each excavation was followed by the prompt publication of a lavish preliminary report (*MM* 1963-1970). Since then, several studies have been devoted to the archaeological discoveries at Tas-Silg, some of a descriptive nature and others more of an interpretative kind (Ribichini 1975; Moscati 1964, 1965a, 1966, 1970, 1973; Ciasca 1970, 1971, 1976-1977, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1991, 1993), but the final report has yet to be published. Italian work in the N part of the site, led by the Universities of Rome and Milan, is still on-going, and in the summers of 1997 and 1998 clearance operations were undertaken in the central part of the site (around Structure 45; see below). As from the summer of 1996 the Department of Classics and

[1] See Ciasca 1978 for the details as to how the Mission to Malta formed part of a research programme on the Phoenicians in the western colonies, notably Sicily, Sardinia, Malta, Tunisia, Pantelleria and Algeria.

Archaeology of the University of Malta started conducting its own excavations in the southern area of the site (Frendo & Bonanno 1997; see below).

The *Missione* excavations soon confirmed the existence of a sanctuary dedicated to the Phoenician Astarte, the Greek Hera, and the Roman goddess Juno on the basis of the inscriptions retrieved (**PLATE 13c**) (Cagiano de Azevedo 1964: 113; Moscati 1990: 45-46). According to the excavators, this was the sanctuary mentioned by Cicero in his Verrine orations, but not the one referred to by Ptolemy dedicated to Heracles/Melqart as had been assumed by many local historians since early modern times (see Bonanno 1981).

The excavations conducted by the Italians at Tas-Silg uncovered various remains from the site's history. The earliest date to the prehistoric Tarxien phase (about 3000 BC) when a megalithic temple was built on the highest point on the hillock. The site seems to have attracted attention during the succeeding Borg in-Nadur and Bahrija phases of the Late Bronze Age. The earliest Phoenician settlers seem to have carried out their ritual activities within the remains of the prehistoric temple (Area 2 South) and it was only in the fifth century BC that major restructuring of the religious precinct took place (Ciasca 1970: 96; also Frendo 1995). According to the reconstruction (**FIGURE.53a**) put forward by Antonia Ciasca (1976-1977) who was responsible for field direction, it included the incorporation of an altar (Structure 45) flanked by two attached or free-standing pillars crowned by a double Egyptianising capital, as suggested by the dig's architect (Davico 1973: 85; Ciasca 1976-1977: 165, 170, figs 1-2).[2] Behind this archaic set-up the prehistoric layout would have

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[2] The capital was found in a secondary context, built into a Byzantine wall (M21) in the southern area of the site (Caprino 1973: 43-57; Davico 1973: 73-85; *MM 1970*: plates 38.2, 39.1, 39.2). In her 1976-1977 publication Ciasca noted that this type of capital was an 'unicum' in Phoenician archaeology. This was later rectified (Ciasca 1991: 757 n. 10) after Dunand & Saliby published the results of their investigations at the *Ma'abed* of Amrith (1985) which included the discovery of two similar capitals. See **3.1.2** above. Ciasca's reconstruction has been accepted by some (e.g. Gras, Rouillard & Teixidor 1995: 88-89; Vidal González 1996: fig. 47a). Other Egyptianising cornice blocks were found at Tas-Silg, all from secondary contexts: in wall M26, 1.35 m. long, 0.44 m. high and 0.77 m. deep (Caprino 1973: 53, plate 40.1); in wall M34, 0.76 m. high and 0.47 m. deep (Caprino 1973: 53, plate 40.2); reutilised in a wall between 40A and 40B, 0.28 m. high and includes the roll moulding (Ciasca 1967: 33, plate 21.2); in Area 2 North (Davico 1973: 77, plates 3, 20.1).

continued to exist.[3] Further alterations to the sanctuary were carried out in the last centuries of the first millennium BC and these included the building of 'sacrificial precincts' (Ciasca 1993) to the north (Area 1, Area 2 North), and fortifications to the north (Area 1) and south (Areas 4, 3) of the central part of the temple. These fortifications seem to have cut votive dumps (*scarici votivi*) strewn on the outskirts of the temple. Further rebuilding took place on the site in Byzantine times when a Christian basilica was built by adapting the ruins of the earlier Prehistoric/Phoenician/Punic/Roman religious edifice. An Islamic mosque has even been postulated from the remains, but this assertion has been contested. As Ciasca points out (1991: 756; 1993: 233-234, n. 2), the continuous building activity on the site makes it difficult to ascertain the extent of the complex for each respective building phase, but the Hellenistic and Byzantine defenses to the north and south of the site, coupled with the marked decline of pottery scatters in the fields beyond, seem to mark the limits. The overall extent in the Hellenistic period seems to have been an area of about 90 by 100 m. (1993: 226).[4]

In a recent article, Antonia Ciasca (1993) has made reconstructions for what she calls 'sacrificial precincts' at Tas-Silg, following what she had discussed in a previous paper (1976-1977: 166-167 n. 10). These include Structures 45, 38, 43, and Space 4.[5]

Structure 45 consists of a slab of limestone (2.75 by 1.10 m) embedded in a rectangular cut in the bedrock and situated outside the prehistoric temple, exactly on

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[3] The adaptation of the architectural remains dating to the prehistoric period has induced many to think of continuation of religious beliefs and practices down the centuries at Tas-Silg: the prehistoric belief in a local mother goddess, represented in a statue recovered from the site, was transformed into a belief in the feritility goddess of the Phoenicians Astarte (see Amadasi Guzzo 1993: 208; Moscati 1993: 288; Frendo 1995). Elsewhere (Vella 1998), I have discussed the problems with seeing continuity on the basis of single artefacts (like the statue of the mother goddess) when the archaeological context is overlooked.

[4] These are the dimensions cited in **Table 4.2.** Note that the area is one of the largest despite Ciasca's 'rather small area of the sanctuary'.

[5] Structures 42 and 46 are left out of the discussion since they are impossible to reconstruct. Only the foundation blocks which lined the base of the structures survive. These were incorporated in the second/first century BC paving of the yard. Ciasca (1993: 229-230) suggests that 'these are the badly preserved remains of small chapels or niches', and refers to Wagner (1980) who mentions such installations in Phoenician sanctuaries. A reference to the two chapels in Vidal González (1996: 19) gives the impression that they really exist.

its central axis. It has channels on three sides and three notches within the channel on the east side (**FIGURE 53**). The installation, which was covered over by paving slabs is difficult to date: Ciasca (1976-1977: 166 n. 10) had refused to supply a date, and recently said (1993: 229) that 'it could have been [...] in use for the duration of some century or so' before it was obliterated by flooring slabs dating to the second-first centuries BC. However, she still thinks that it should be 'ideally related to the first Phoenician phase of the eighth century B.C. [...]' (1993: 232).[6] Ciasca had no doubts about the function of this structure when it was uncovered and she has repeated her claim more recently: 'There are no doubts whatsoever regarding the function of the installation which can be defined as an altar. It must be an area reserved for offerings that had to be treated by fire.' (Ciasca 1993: 228; also 1976-1977: 166 n. 10) According to Ciasca 'the remains of bronze nails in the soft limestone block [...] held one or more blades arranged in a way to cover the top of the altar to insulate the stone' (1993: 228). The reconstruction she offered for the structure (1993: figs 5-6) includes three vertical elements held in the notches suggestive of the three baetyled altars visible on many stele (**FIGURE 53b, c**). She also cites similar installations in Byblos (Temple of the Obelisks), Sicily (Solunto) (**FIGURE 74**) and Kommos (Temple B) in Crete (**FIGURE 50**).

A stone embedded in the rock in the vicinity of Structure 45, to its east, was also considered as 'a purely cultic' installation by Ciasca (1993: 229). The stone is perforated by a hole intended for liquid offerings: 'a veritable means of communication between the sanctuary and the underworld'. Chronological attribution is difficult but it seems that the second-first century BC reconstruction of the temple area obliterated the feature.

Structures 38 and 43 are two adjacent spaces in the northern area of the site (**FIGURE 54**), beyond the central part of the sanctuary. Structure 43 (*MM 1965*: figs 1-2, plate 1) is a rectangular area 5 m. wide and about 8.50 m. long, its major axis oriented SW-NE. Only traces of the SW wall [a] survive, together with parts of the

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[6] Ribichini (1975) dated the installation to the sixth century BC without giving the reasons for doing so.

slab flooring which showed traces of fire action and a polish acquired through use (Ciasca 1967: 30-31). Ciasca (1993: 231, fig.7) provides an ideal reconstruction of Structure 43 which she interprets as a 'low monumental altar' (Ciasca 1976-1977: 166-167 n. 10) surrounded by a wall or parapet with entrance on the SE side. What appears to be an enclosing wall [D] of the sanctuary cut Structure 43 on its NE side, providing a *terminus ante quem* for the altar sometime before the third century BC (Ciasca 1993: 231). Ciasca makes no reference to any finds retrieved from within Structure 43.

Structure 38 leans against Structure 43, following the same orientation, and separated by a common wall, parts of which had been robbed in antiquity. Only the S corner of structure 38 survives: the remains of two walls of ashlar blocks (measuring 1.50-1.90 m. in length, 0.30-0.33m wide, 0.65 m. high) laid at right angles to each other. The space defined by the walls suggests a width of 4.40 m. for Structure 38 but the length is not discernible (Ciasca 1993: 231, fig. 8).[7] The floor was made of packed limestone chippings visible in the section of the robber's trench. Ciasca notes that the material accumulated within Structure 38 was disturbed when the common wall was removed and wall [D] built (1967: 27). She also points out that the area was replete with ashy deposit and was full of pottery (1966: 39). She also claims to have lifted pottery which was lying directly above the floor and which belonged to a homogenous group dating to the late second century BC and including plates (some with Punic and Neo-Punic inscriptions) and amphorae (Ciasca 1966: 38-39; 1967: 29-30). Other finds listed by Ciasca include an amulet representing the Egyptian falcon-headed god Horus (dated to the sixth century BC; Ciasca 1988: 208), fragments of four terracotta statuettes (1967: 29-30), a bronze fragment of an olive leaf, fragments of ostrich egg, glass beads, and fragments of coral (1966: 39-40). According to Ciasca, Structure 38 was another altar, level with the floor and entered from the N so that the priest conducting the ritual would have been facing the temple opposite. It would have substituted the adjacent altar 43 when this went out of use as a new wall [D] was laid cutting across it (1967: 29; 1976-1977: 166-167 n. 10; 1993: 231). Ciasca recognises a Greek prototype for altars 43 and 38 (i.e. the 'low monumental altar' of Yavis (1949)) and notes that they are innovative in the sense that they follow a different orientation

[7] Different dimensions are given in Ciasca 1967: 28.

to the rest of the complex. Tentatively she asks whether this change should be connected with the introduction of the cult of Demeter and Core in Carthage at the beginning of the fourth century BC (Ciasca 1993: 233).

Space 4 (*MM 1963*: figs 5-6, plates 12-13; *MM1964*: fig. 2, plates 4-6) or Vano F, is a rectangular area or room measuring 3.50 by 6.50 m (Ciasca 1993: 231).[8] Its minor axis is oriented NNE-SSW. The area is paved with slabs, except in two areas to the W and E, and is surrounded by a low wall of ashlar blocks (**FIGURE 54**). A short wall perpendicular to the S wall partially divides Space 4 into two. The entrance seems to have been through an opening (0.90 m. wide) in the N wall but this was blocked with the drum of a fluted column. The reddening of the stonework suggested to the excavators the repeated action of fire within this area. Excavation within Space 4 revealed a stratigraphy composed of various layers which included charcoal and ash, a large quantity of ceramics, animal and fish bone, and shell (Ciasca 1964: 59). Ciasca notes that the ceramics belonged to a homogenous group dating to the first century BC-first century AD. Some of the pottery (plates and bowls) was also inscribed with the name of the Greek goddess Hera. Fragments of architectural decorations in plaster and stone were also recovered. From a sondage carried out in an area free of paving slabs (western part of Space 4), and 0.30 m. below the level of the floor, the excavators lifted an ivory plaque inscribed with Punic letters (*MM 1968*: plate 11.1-2; Amadasi Guzzo 1969: 67-72), together with a potsherd inscribed with Greek letters and glass beads belonging to a necklace (Ciasca 1969: 36). Space 4 has been labelled a 'sacrificial precinct' or altar by Ciasca who considers it to be the most recent sacrifical area at Tas-Silg. Its alignment suggests that it was included in the Hellenistic restoration that had taken place on the rest of the complex to the south (1993: 231-232).

Ciasca also sees Punic cultic installations in various other remains uncovered at Tas-Silg, to include the following (1993: 230-232): a Prehistoric megalithic basin 47 (*MM 1968*: figs 1-2, plate 1) connected with ritual ablutions, and Structure 58,

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[8] The preliminary report gives the dimensions as 3.20 by 9.0 m. (Ciasca 1964: 58)

which although ranking as 'one of the cultic installations, its functional identification remains problematic [...]'.

Discussion. Various scholars have considered Tas-Silg in their discussion of Phoenician and Punic religious sites in the Mediterranean (Fantar 1986: 59). Cristiano Grottanelli (1981b) and others (e.g. Ciasca 1988: 208; Aubet 1994: 148 - but see review by Vella (1997a); Vidal González 1996: 20), considered it an extra-urban cosmopolitan coastal sanctuary dedicated to Astarte, visited by merchants and sailors plying central Mediterranean waters.

But the excavations at Tas-Silg are not without problems, and understanding the nature of this extensive site is fraught with numerous difficulties. Most of these stem from the nature of the site itself: continuous rebuilding lasting more than three thousand years has disturbed and destroyed much of the archaeological stratigraphy of earlier phases.[9] Matters are further complicated because a final report of the excavations has yet to be published. Going by what has already been published, a reading of the reports makes it immediately apparent that site formation processes were not tackled properly at Tas-Silg, and that excavation work suffered from a poor methodology. The excavator's choice to dig sondages to reveal the stratigraphy was perhaps a sound move and definitely better than following walls by digging around them, a system which is apparent from some of the photos (e.g. Ward 1968: plate 25a). But unfortunately, few attempts were made to differentiate between primary and secondary depositions and when this was done, as with the so-called "votive dumps" found strewn across certain areas to the south (Areas 3, 4) and north (Area 2 north), the criteria for defining such deposits as refuse are not supplied. Also, the stratigraphy related to each structure is not always clear. Whereas attempts were made to differentiate between strata (*strati*) and certain features (like walls and fills), these are not numbered or annotated and therefore we simply do not know which finds are

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[9] Indeed, as one scholar has remarked (Luttrell 1975: 12), an important point which arose from the Italian fieldwork at Tas-Silg is that it is practically impossible to reveal undisturbed stratigraphy in a depth sometimes of about 0.50 m. when successive occupation has taken place. Aware of this

coming from which layer. The stratification of a spatial unit (e.g. a room) is listed but when it comes to the finds the provenance is given as the spatial unit rather than the stratum or layer. Moreover, and this is perhaps the major fault with the preliminary reports, the excavators did not include section drawings to supplement the description of the stratification in the text.[10] All the foregoing problems have been highlighted in a recent article by Paolo Brusasco (1993) where he discusses the transition from the Late Bronze Age to the early Phoenician period at the site on the basis of pottery distribution in various sondages.[11] With reference to the structures discussed above, it is difficult to ascertain whether the material lifted from within structures 38, 43 and 4 are primary depositions or not. Indeed, we lack the sort of data discussed in CHAPTER II to help us in our inquiry (see below). In discussing Structure 38 we are told that the pottery belongs to a *homogenous* group. And yet we are also told that there was pottery from earlier levels and periods: '[...] a questa ceramica se ne aggiungono sporadicamente altri apparenti a livelli più antichi [...]') (Ciasca 1967: 29). Moreover, the material contained within Structure 38, the 'fill' (*riempimento*) as Ciasca calls it (1966: 39), is similar to the material retrieved from the yard (cortile 8) outside. This would suggest that the deposit within Structure 38 is a secondary deposit. Also with Structure 4 there are problems of the kind: for whereas Ciasca describes the stratigraphy revealed in a sondage as 'intact' (*intatto*), a glance at one of the published photographs (Ciasca 1966: 41 and plate 12.2) shows that the stratigraphy went beyond the N wall which she suggests contained the material in the first place. Coupled with these problems regarding the stratigraphic interpretation of the site are those related to dating and phasing of the features. The method of dating is not always consistent. So for example, whereas the pottery prevailing in a stratum is usually taken to date that

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problem, more so because I have been involved with renewed excavations at the site between 1996-1998, it is with due caution that criticisms are directed at the preliminary results.

[10] Section drawings were only made in the last campaign for the excavation of the Hellenistic and Byzantine defenses to the south and a deep sondage in the north (*MM 1970*: figs 4-9, plate 21). This is a problem which is encountered on other Italian excavations of the time (e.g. Motya, Monte Sirai). Isserlin (1974: 41) has remarked that a correlation of his own results at Motya with those of the Soprintendenza at Palermo was handicapped by the absence of archaeological section drawings in the report.

[11] Despite the appearance of this seminal work which argues for a decline of the local population at the time of the Phoenicians' arrival in Malta (see Frendo 1995), Moscati (1993: 288) still insists on seeing an 'uninterrupted and related patronage' between the prehistoric and early Phoenician phases at Tas-Silg. Ciasca has recently changed her opinion and takes a different stand: '[...] pour l'heure, il n'y a pas

stratum after possibilities of intrusive material are considered and eliminated, in some cases this is ignored, and association of pottery is taken to mean cohabitation of different peoples on the site (see Brusasco 1993: 3ff.). Also, very often the dating put forward consists of a *terminus ante quem* and nothing more. Besides, a comprehensive and exhaustive typology of the pottery from Tas-Silg has still to be published to update preliminary notes and remarks already in print (Ciasca 1982). It is hoped that the foregoing shortcomings are rectified, at least in part, with the current work being undertaken at Tas-Silg.[12]

For the scope of the present work we still have to ask whether we are justified in classifying the remains at Tas-Silg as of a religious nature. For this claim has been taken for granted since the first excavation season came to an end in 1963 and never questioned. Indeed, it is not always clear from the preliminary reports and other publications on what grounds the religious nature of Tas-Silg has been defended. For example, in her discussion of the structures described above, Ciasca does not specify *exactly* what makes a slab of stone or a rectangular space an altar, although one suspects that traces of burning are considered an important criterion (1993: 232, 234 n. 9).[13] But she does not consider the fact that traces of burning can be the result of other actions not commensurate with a religious interpretation, like the burning down of a wooden roof or of a wooden support.

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de contextes archéologiques sûrs, "fermés", avec de la céramique Maltaise du Bronze et de la céramique phénicienne.' (1995b: 706)

[12] Ciasca (1993: 233) speaks of 'studies that are taking place on the architectural form of the various phases of the sanctuary and its position within the ambit of the Mediterranean sector between Sicily and Italy', repeating what she had announced in a international conference six years earlier (1991: 756 n. 7). These aims are being investigated by the Italian team by clearing certain areas of the northern part of the site (altar 45 was cleared in June 1997) and cleaning and drawing of section faces. A stratigraphic matrix is being prepared. Moreover, a study of ceramic imports with an emphasis on the amphorae is being undertaken. On the southern part of the site, the University of Malta is conducting excavations with the primary aim of understanding the formation processes and stratigraphy (Simon Mason - Kent; Nicholas Vella - Bristol) and establishing a pottery typology (Claudia Sagona - Melbourne). A study of the inscribed pot sherds (Anthony Frendo - Malta) and of floral and faunal remains (Chris Hunt - Huddersfield; Patrick Schembri - Malta) is also being undertaken. The contextual multi-disciplinary approach will hopefully renew debate on the occupational history of this very important site. A preliminary report is being prepared for publication in 1999.

[13] For example, why was Structure 34 (Area 2 North) (Ciasca 1966: 27-28) (**FIGURE 54**) not considered as a potential altar when its rectangular architectural layout (measuring 8 by 2 m., and which includes a bench on the south wall), orientation (ESE-WNW) and traces of fire on the stonework recall Structures 38 and 43 and Space 4?

Despite the limitations and difficulties with the data from Tas-Silg, we are still in a position to present a case, *at least as far as a broad outline goes*, for religious ritual at the site. In the 'votive dumps' unearthed in the southern sector of Tas-Silg the excavators report the retrieval of numerous inscribed pot sherds (**PLATE 13c**), either fragmentary or complete. These have been classified as votive inscriptions made on the pot before firing (see Amadasi Guzzo 1993b, Trump 1997: 403). The retrieval of all these inscriptions is a remarkable datum from the site, and it is plausible to suggest that we have evidence for redundancy here, that is of the repeated occurrence of an artefact group (inscribed pottery) in the archaeological record. The pottery in itself is hardly of any importance: it consists of small open vessels and includes no unusual forms. What makes the pottery exceptional are the dedications inscribed on some vessels *before* firing: here, intentionality emerges as a crucial part in the study. Now we also know that some of the inscriptions evoke in different ways the Phoenician deities Astarte and perhaps Tanit so that their votive nature is established. Indeed, it is plausible to suggest that the pottery vessels were serving a divine being or beings even though the cult image of the deities has not been identified.[14]

What is difficult to establish from the preliminary reports is the nature of the archaeological context. The Italian excavators refer to this as a 'votive dump' (*scarico votivo*) but they do not say why they classify the deposits as dumps. The current University of Malta excavations at Tas-Silg (south) has recovered a number of such inscriptions written on complete or fragmentary plates, and from the work carried out thus far it *seems* that this artefact group forms part of a midden: the deposits of dark earth are the result of episodic dumping on the outskirts of the central area of the

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[14] 683 complete or broken pots have been recovered inscribed with the letters *lt*, while 164 were inscribed with the letters *l'štrt* (to Astarte). Other specimens were inscribed with the letters *tn*, *tt*, *t* and *t* with a stroke above it. There is a strong debate amongst epigraphists and philologists on the meaning of these inscriptions, especially *lt*, *tn* and *tt*, thought to be abbreviations of the names of the deities (to Tanit, Tanit) according to a system adopted by the Phoenicians (see Chabot 1951; Amadasi Guzzo 1993b). Recently Frendo (1996) has argued that *tt* could be an abbreviation of Tanit-Astarte (or Tin(n)it-Astarte), recalled on an inscription from Sarepta. Unfortunately, as pointed out by Amadasi Guzzo (1993b: 207), we are still not in a position to date the inscribed pottery (although a date in the third century BC is likely) before a comprehensive study of all the inscriptions from the 1960s excavations is carried out.

complex after it had been in use elsewhere.[15] The spatial patterning of the pottery (including angle of dip of sherds or complete pots as observed both in plan every 0.05 m. and in the trench section) and the inclination (southwards) of alternating lenses of different colour and composition, suggests that the material was dumped from the higher areas of the site. The good condition of the pottery, in terms of fragmentation (whole pots are being recovered and others are easily restorable) and abrasion of the fabric (hardly any), suggests that that we are dealing with a "special" dump or midden. Since we have established that at least some of the pottery was used as, or contained, offerings to Phoenician and Punic deities, it is plausible to argue that we have here dumps connected with ritual activities in the area. We also have new information arising from a study of the floral and faunal material found in association with the inscribed sherds and pots within the same stratigraphic unit and recovered using dry sieving and wet flotation techniques. This includes various types of marine shell including the *murex* and *Cardium* varieties, goat's or sheep's horns, bird bones, sea urchins, coral, limpets, oysters, fish bones, and a large quantity of charcoal. However, in view of what was discussed in CHAPTER II above, it is important to remember that association of artefacts in archaeological context does not necessarily imply association in systemic context. In other words we cannot be certain whether the inscribed pots and the shells or sea urchins were used in the same ritual because the archaeological context is secondary. Unfortunately, as we have seen above, we are not in a position to assess properly the nature of the deposits uncovered from the structures Ciasca classifies as altars. If these had contained primary deposits a comparison would have made possible one definition of the type of religious ritual carried out at Tas-Silg.

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[15] This information is being included here with the permission of the project directors, Dr Anthony Frendo and Professor Anthony Bonanno of the University of Malta. The system of recording being used at Tas-Silg by the University of Malta to investigate refuse and the formation of middens comes

3.5.2 Zurrieq Tower, Malta

Site visit: September 1994, 14 January 1998

Reported: Houel 1787: 97-98

Published: Galea 1939; Zammit 1964

Description and discussion. It appears to have been the French traveller Jean Houel who first published a description of the building remains, commonly known as the 'Punic tower', visible in the Archpriest's house at the village of Zurrieq. In the account of his tour of Sicily, Malta and Lipari, Houel provided an illustration of the remains, including a plan, where he suggested that they belonged to a house of the Greek period: '*reste d'une maison de constrution Grecque, au Casal Zurrico*' (Houel 1787: 97-98, plate 259 figs 1, 2) (**FIGURE 55a**).

Investigations of the remains were carried out in 1938 by R. V. Galea, who was acting as Director for the Museums Department for part of that year. A detailed report of his researches was included in the Annual Report for 1938-1939 (Galea 1939), where we are also told that drawings (plans, elevations and sections) were made and deposited in the Museum. These have remained unpublished but attempts to trace them in the archives proved successful (**FIGURES 55b, 56**).[1] Galea remarks that 'other archaeologists recently inspected the remains, but no publications regarding the same have, as far as it is known, come to light' (1939: II). Galea was able to point out that the complex includes a small tower and parts of two walls of the same building already known from Houel's plan.

The building has a square plan of side 3 m., and is 6.3 m. high from the upper edge of the cornice to bed-rock.[2] It is built of ashlar blocks of (Globigerina) limestone

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[1] These are being reproduced by kind permission of the Director, National Museum of Archaeology, Malta. The drawing has the initials R.D.B. in the bottom left hand corner and is undated.

[2] The measurements have been read off the plan just mentioned (**FIGURES 55, 56**). Houel (1787: 98) gives the measurements as 9' square and about 27' in height, while Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 374) give the height as 5.66 m. and the sides as 3.23 m. respectively. Galea (1939) gives the height from 'ground level to the upper edge of the cornice' as 18' 6", or 5.64 m. Ashby (1915: 49) gives the height as 25'. Trump (1990: 94) says that the tower measures 3 m. a side and 5.60 m. high. Hölbl (1989: 147 n. 6)

which outcrops in the area. The blocks are 0.48 m. thick and the length varies with some exceeding 1.80 m. in length. The blocks are laid without mortar and have a remarkable fit at the joints. The building is crowned with an Egyptian-style cavetto cornice above a round moulding and roofed by six slabs. Galea suggested that the roofing slabs and impermeable stratum laid above them is of recent construction. The original door was on the NE side, framed by a trilithon of slabs. Another door was added at a later date on the NW together with a window on the SE, presumably after Houel's time because it does not appear in his plan. The window on the SW side could be a later addition but certainly earlier than Houel as it is included in his illustrations. Scrapings of the layers of whitewash off the walls adjacent to the edifice retraced a 1.82 m. prolongation of the NE wall, and the remains of another (7.6 m. long) at right angles to the first along Carmel street, as shown in Houel's plan. The walls are built in the same technique and in parts survived to a height of 4.2 m. In Houel's illustration they are shown surmounted by a Greek cornice of which he gives the profile, but this no longer survives and the walls are incorporated into modern private houses. The cross-wall seen standing in Houel's drawing and the prolungation of the SE wall were not traced.

Investigations were again carried out in 1964 by the Museums Department under the direction of C. G. Zammit, 'to date by excavation the tower-like structure' (1964: 6). An L-shaped trench was dug to a depth of 1.66 m. against the S wall. No stratified layers were noticed and the sherds lifted belonged to different periods (Punic to recent). The investigations revealed that the tower was built on a stepped foundation on the edge of a vertical drop in the bedrock, suggesting to Zammit that here could be the remains of an ancient quarry. Investigations inside the tower had to be postponed.[3]

In his description, Houel was convinced that the remains at Zurrieq were Greek. Only the Greeks, he argued, could cut stone perfectly: 'Les murs de cet édifice

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accepts the dimensions given by Galea, and states that the height given by Mayr (1909: 89) as 7.45 m. is wrong.

[3] Digging within the tower seems to have been carried out in the recent past, but not by the Museums Department. The present floor is wooden and covered by a carpet.

sont faits en pierre parfaitement taillée & appareillée. C'est à cette perfection que je reconnais le caractère de la nation qui l'a éléve: je n'ai pais besoin de nommer les Grecs' (Houel 1787: 98). Galea (1939) followed Houel in describing the remains as 'typically Greek'. It was the Frenchmen Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 374) who associated the building with the Phoenicians on account of the Egyptianising cavetto cornice which crowned it, and of Houel they said: '[...] il ne connaissait pas l'art oriental et il n'a même pas songé aux Phéniciens.' They were followed by Albert Mayr in 1909 when he excluded a Greek colonisation for Malta (1909: 89-90, fig. 30).[4] As to the building's use, opinions differ.[5] Perrot & Chipiez followed Houel in identifying the remains with domestic architecture. Thomas Ashby (1915: 49), who refers to Mayr, thought that it was a 'pre-Roman building, probably a country-house of the Phoenician period'. Others, however, agree that the building was associated with religious or funerary ritual. Gouder (1978: 183; 1990: 17), like Hölbl (1989: 147), argues that the Egyptianising cornice was used by the Phoenicians in temple architecture, and speculates that the Zurrieq tower could in fact be the temple of Melqart mentioned in Ptolemy's *Geographia*.[6] Trump (1990: 94), like Ciasca (1991: 755) who dates it to the fourth-third centuries BC, thinks it resembles a monumental tomb, but does not exclude the possibility of a temple here (1997: 403 citing personal communication with B. Isserlin).

Unfortunately, no finds were made during the excavations at the Zurrieq tower which could imply action commensurate with a religious interpretation. Taking the site in isolation we are not justified in describing the complex as a religious site.

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[4] On the tradition of an ancient Greek colony in Malta see Bonanno 1983.

[5] Vidal González (1996: 22) lists the suggestions of various authors but does not supply his own opinion.

[6] Surprisingly, the Zurrieq tower is left out of Wagner's treatment (1980) of the Egyptian influence on Phoenician architecture. It is also omitted from standard works on the Phoenicians, like Rawlinson (1889) and Harden (1962).

3.6.1 Pyrgi

Site visit: —

Reported: Colonna *et al.* 1964

Published: *Pyrgi 1970*

Description and discussion. A series of excavation campaigns at the coastal site of Santa Severa, the ancient Pyrgi, were undertaken by the Istituto di Etruscologia e Antichità Italiche, University of Roma, with the collaboration of the Soprintendenza alle Antichità dell'Etruria Meridionale, starting in 1957. The project was directed by Massimo Pallottino and Mario Moretti, from the respective institutions. Work in the field was directed by Giovanni Colonna. The excavations uncovered the foundation remains of two Etruscan temples built side by side (Temple B and Temple A), connected to the nearby city of Caere (present-day Cerveteri) by a direct road (*Pyrgi 1970*: figs 1-4) (**FIGURE 57**). That Pyrgi was the site of a famous sanctuary was already known through classical sources, including its sacking by Dionysius of Syracuse in 384 BC. The key discovery at the site was made in the seventh campaign, on 8 July 1964, in an area between the two temples (Area C): three gold sheets were recovered, two inscribed with Etruscan letters and one in Phoenician, attesting to the dedication of a 'sacred place' (*'šr qdš*) by Thefarie Velianas who 'ruled over Caere' (*mlk 'l kyšry'*), to Phoenician Astarte and Etruscan Uni. The inscriptions have been dated to about 500 BC (Amadasi Guzzo 1995: 673; see Colonna 1989-1990: 209 n. 47). A preliminary report of the excavation was published in the same year together with a study of the inscriptions (Colonna *et al.* 1964; Amadasi Guzzo 1990a: 94-97). A comprehensive and exhaustive report was published in 1970 (*Pyrgi 1970*, especially Colonna 1970b, 1970c).[1]

The inscriptions from Pyrgi have attracted a lot of attention from archaeologists intent on understanding the role of the Carthaginians in Etruria following their allied victory against the Phocaeans at Alalia in Corsica in 535 BC

[1] A report of another series of excavations (1969-1971) has been published (*Notizie degli Scavi di Antichita* 1990 - announced in Colonna 1989-1990: 199 n. 6), while another excavation campaign started in 1977.

(e.g. Pallottino 1970: 737-743; Bloch 1983, 1986; Acquaro 1988b: 533-534; Hvidberg-Hansen 1988; Gras *et al.* 1995: 142-144). The reading and interpretation of the inscriptions has fuelled a debate producing an immense bibliography.[2] The principal reason for incorporating the site in the present study is to highlight the nature of the archaeological context of the inscribed gold sheets which has largely been taken for granted in the literature.

Temple B is the earliest of the two religious buildings at Santa Severa (**FIGURE 57**). It was built about 510 BC on an artificial fill, and measures 29.70 by 20 m. At a distance of 10.40 m. from Temple B and parallel to it, Temple A was built, measuring 34.47 by 23.98 m. Its date is about 460 BC on the basis of the architectural terracottas and the pottery retrieved from within its foundations (Colonna 1970a: 267). The layout and decoration of both buildings, as reconstructed by the excavators, place them firmly into the *koiné* of Etruscan religious architecture (*Pyrgi 1970*; Pallottino 1970: 741-742; Colonna 1970b: 289; 1986: 471). Adjacent to Temple B, in the space between the two temples (Area C), a small rectangular construction, referred to as a 'vasca' (basin) in the first report and subsequently as 'enclosure' (*recinto*) (Colonna 1970c: 597), was uncovered measuring 1 by 1.80 m. and 0.40-0.45 m. high (Colonna 1964: 53-56, plates 26-30; 1970c: 597-604) (**FIGURE 58**). The basin was carefully laid out, built of a trachytic-tuff trapezoidal block on its SW side, and six blocks of Caeretan tuff covered in white plaster on the NW and NE side. The remaining SE side was closed off by three intact terracotta end-tegulae (1970c: figs 452-454). Inside the basin were numerous fragments of architectural terracottas placed one above the other (1970c: fig. 450), fragments of plastered tuff blocks, the three inscribed gold sheets (1970c: plate 4), a fragment of a bronze sheet inscribed in Etruscan (1970c: figs 457-458), and six bronze nails laminated in gold leaf one of which found attached to a ceramic fragment (1970c: figs 455-456). The basin was covered with similar fragments of architectural terracottas, burying it completely. The three inscribed gold sheets were found folded (appearing like flattened tubes) exactly in the middle of the rectangular basin, within the upper part of the fill (Colonna 1964: 56; 1970c: figs.

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[2] See Colonna (1989-1990) for a bibliography of the most important contributions and for the latest debates; also Pallottino 1970 and Amadasi Guzzo 1995: 670-673.

448-449). Prompt conservation measures were taken on the gold sheets, unfolding them flat and restoring them to what was presumably their original appearance (**PLATE 13b**). The sheets were perforated by the nails, recovered still inside the holes (Pallottino 1964; Vlad Borrelli 1964, plates 34-39; Colonna 1970c: figs 459-460, plate 4).[3]

In his reports, Colonna argues that the basin in Area C has to be seen in relation to Temple B nearby (1989-1990: 215). Excavation revealed that the basin was built above an earlier and much larger rectangular enclosure annexed to Temple B. The earlier enclosure included a pit (3.15 m. deep) built alongside a structure referred to as altar, perforated by a very narrow but deep second pit (0.14 m. in diameter, 2 m. deep) (Colonna 1970c: 589-590, figs 437-440).[4] The upper courses of the walls of the earlier enclosure seem to have been demolished and robbed in the first half of the fifth century BC, as attested by Attic pottery, at the same time that Temple A was being built (Colonna 1970c: 594; 1970d: 459). The whole area was covered by a layer of tuff debris into which the basin was built. The architectural terracottas of the basin's fill are similar to ones found scattered outside the basin from a deposit $A\beta^2$, and which belong exclusively to Temple B. The basin and surrounding area between both temples was found covered with a layer of tuff chippings, $A\beta^1$ (Colonna 1970c: 600). Both layers seem to form part of a levelling fill for a new floor containing, at least in Area C, architectural debris solely from Temple B.[5] Colonna suggests that the layer Aβ, which also contained traces of carbonized wood, was formed from the debris of Temple B when this building fell into ruins, perhaps by a fire (1970d: 446-447). The building of the basin or enclosure for the inscribed gold sheets would have been built when $A\beta^2$ was being formed, about the third century BC, since the plastered blocks

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[3] The inscribed gold sheets have the following maximum measurements: 19.3 by 9.3 cm. (Punic); 18.5 by 8.1 cm. (Etruscan long); 19.2 by 9.5 cm. (Etruscan short) (Vlad Borrelli 1964).

[4] From the first pit the excavators recovered animal bones belonging to a pig, a badger and a cockerel, together with pottery sherds. This suggested to Colonna that this was a pit for offerings, a *bothros*.

[5] The stratigraphy encountered in the area between the two temples is discussed in Colonna 1970d, especially pp. 444-446. Unfortunately, the section drawings (eg. section N-N in *Pyrgi 1970*: fig. 194, also fig. 438) do not differentiate between $A\beta^1$ and $A\beta^2$. When the latter layers could not be differentiated during excavation the archaeologists called the layer replete with tegulae and architectural terracottas (*grande scarico di tegolame*) simply Aβ (Colonna 1970d: 444, 446).

and the terracotta tegulae appear to belong to Temple B (Colonna 1970c: 600, n. 1; 1989-1990: 197).

From the stratigraphic evidence described thus far, it is therefore evident that the inscribed gold sheets were found in a secondary context related to the formation of Temple B in the archaeological record. Colonna argues that the rectangular basin or enclosure was built purposely to contain the inscribed gold sheets, not so much to protect them (since they were placed right below the surface of its fill) as to mark out their location underneath a new floor level (1970: 601, 604; see also Acquaro 1988b: 533). Colonna argues that the inscribed gold sheets must have been affixed to some structure within Temple B. From a close analysis of the contents of the inscriptions he also tries to identify the structural remains within Temple B equivalent to the architectural terms employed, while vehemently opposing a contribution by Cristofani (1989; see Amadasi Guzzo 1995: 671-672): *bt*, *'šr qdš*, and the *tw* (Colonna 1989-1990). In the Phoenician inscription these terms are used in the following order: 1) the *'šr qdš*, made and donated by Thefarie; 2) the *bt*, in which the *'šr qdš* is found; 3) the *tw*, located in that which Thefarie made and donated, therefore the *'šr qdš*. Colonna suggests (1989-1990: 210-212, fig. 9) the following: the *bt* (= house) would be the entire religious complex, the sanctuary; the *'šr qdš* (= holy place) would be the temple; the *tw* (not attested elsewhere nor in biblical Hebrew) would be the innermost part of the temple, the cella or the holy of holies of the Bible.[6] Thus, Thefarie's gift to the Phoenician goddess Astarte would be a temple (B).

We can conclude by noting the following: firstly, there is nothing which sticks out as Phoenician or Punic at Pyrgi, if one eliminates the inscription on the gold sheet; secondly, while there is no doubt that the inscriptions are related to religious practices, they were retrieved from a secondary context; the secondary context is special if we accept that the enclosure was built purposely and that this action might be commensurate with a religious interpretation; thirdly, Colonna's case regarding the

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[6] Colonna (1989-1990: 202 n. 21) refuses to accept an earlier interpretation of *tw* as a sign of a cross, a symbol for the holy place, because according to him the marking out of a holy place using signs was not used by the Phoenicians. This is untrue and such a sign can be seen on the highest point of the rock

reading of the stratigraphy in Area C has been shown to be correct, and his interpretation of the architectural terms in the inscriptions is an impressive one; yet his case would have been stronger if the inscriptions were retrieved from a primary context within Temple B.

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out-crop at the centre of the tophet in Sulcis, Sardinia. However, Colonna's interpretation is more acceptable because the inscription speaks of a *tw* being 'built' or constructed (*bm*).

3.7.1 Erice

Site visit: 15 October 1995

Reported: Cultrera 1935

Published: —

Description and discussion. Monte San Giuliano on the NW coast of Sicily is an impressive mountain which reaches a height of 751 m. above sea level, and commands the immediate hinterland of the seaport of Trapani, 12 km. to the SW (**FIGURE 59**). Perched on the summit of Monte San Giuliano is the modern town of Erice with its Norman castle and fortifications, identified with the Punic *'rk*, the Greek *Erux* and the Latin *Eryx* (**FIGURE 60**). Classical sources differ on the foundation legends associated with the ancient city but one speaks of the tradition which sees an indigenous hero, Eryx founding the city and building a temple to Aphrodite. In 415-413 BC, an alliance between the indigenous Elymians and the Carthaginians made war against the Greeks intent on gaining footholds in western Sicily. Classical literary sources speak of the famous temple of Aphrodite built on the summit of the mountain (Cultrera 1935: 296-298, n. 1), known also through a depiction on the reverse of a Roman Republican coin of *C. Considius Nonianus* (about 60 BC) (**FIGURE 29b**): a tetrastyle Doric temple on a hillock surrounded by a wall ending in two rectangular towers; the legend *ERVC* crowns the gateway (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: fig. 244; Zucca 1989: plate 2). A dedication to Astarte of Eryx, was reputedly found at Erice in the seventeenth century, but was subsequently lost. It is only known through a drawing made by Antonio Corda preserved in two different manuscripts. Only a few words can be read and suggest that the inscription was of a votive nature and mentions the *sophets* (*CIS* I, 135; *ICO* Sic. 1; Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 308 n. 1).

Excavations with the intent of uncovering any ancient remains within the area of the Norman castle were carried out in 1930 (20 July - 30 September) and 1931 (17 June - 17 October). Supervision was in the hands of Pirro Marconi assisted by Ignazio Messina from the Palermo Museum. A report, accompanied by a detailed plan, was

published by Giovanni Cultrera (1935) entitled: *Il "temenos" di Afrodite Ericina e gli scavi del 1930 e del 1931*. Cultrera gives a detailed account of the work undertaken in various areas of the castle esplanade including what he called 'the wall of Daedalus' (*il muro di Dedalo*) and 'the well of Venus' (*il pozzo di Venere*) (1935: 299) (**FIGURE 60**). A number of buildings were demolished to allow excavation of ancient remains (1935: 314, 316). Excavation in several areas proved negative (1935: 304), while the most impressive remains (including a bathing set-up) could be dated to Roman times (1935: 316-318). In the central part of the esplanade which was excavated in its entirety down to bedrock (1935: fig. 13, plate 20) the excavator reported the discovery of a wall (denoted λ, χ, ι, θ, η, ζ) built in an area where the bedrock was inclined. This suggested to Cultrera that the wall formed part of a platform built to sustain the temple, traces of which however could not be traced: 'si ha buona ragione di supporre che il tutto sia stato preparato per la formazione di una piattaforma [...] sufficientemente vasta per contenere un tempio che [...] doveva avere dimensioni non colossali.' (1935: 311 and 313). Various architectural remains were retrieved during the course of the work, mostly from secondary contexts, but Cultrera noted that most dated to Roman times while others could not be dated at all; he even remarked that it was difficult to tell which of the blocks belonged to the temple (1935: 323). To 'Punic times', however, he dated the so-called 'wall of Daedalus' along the NE part of the esplanade (1935: 299, 323).

The existence of a temple at Erice has become a commonplace in the literature. Various authors have discussed the role and diffusion of the cult of Astarte from Erice to Sardinia and North Africa (e.g. Moscati 1968c; Grottanelli 1981b; Zucca 1989b; Lipinski 1995a: 146-147). Tusa also gives the impression that few remains of the sanctuary, 'dedicated first to the Phoenician Astarte and then to Aphrodite and Venus' were actually found on the summit of the mountain (1976: 318), probably following Cultrera (not listed in his bibliography) who had claimed to have found parts of the *temenos*, or sacred enclosure-wall of the temple (1935: 322). Acquaro (1993: 88) says that only few remains of the sanctuary of Astarte survive. But as Falsone (1995: 689-690) rightly points out, 'no traces' which can be identified with certainty with the temple were actually uncovered (also Mingazzini 1949: 223 n.

4). Bisi (1981: 134) makes this important remark too with regards to the sacred enclosure-wall, despite her earlier pronouncement (1968: 134) where she hypothesised that there was 'an open-air altar' on the mount. But as Cultrera himself suggests (1935: 299), the so-called 'wall of Daedalus' is a retaining wall and there we have no evidence whatsoever to defend its 'sacred' character, despite Cultera's insistence to the contrary on this point.

To conclude, therefore, we simply lack the information to throw light on the type of site that existed at Monte San Giuliano in Phoenician and Punic times. What we *can* perhaps argue for the existence of a temple here in Roman times: a *terminus* is set by the series of coins dated to about 60 BC which depict the religious edifice. But what existed on the site *before* that date is unknown. The inscription is actually the only piece of evidence that suggests religious practice but is of little help because we do not know its provenience.

3.7.2 Grotta Regina

Site visit: 10 April 1997

Reported: Rocco 1968

Published: *Grotta Regina I, II*; Rocco 1977

Description and discussion. Situated on the seaward side of Monte Gallo near the modern seaside resort of Mondello on the outskirts of Palermo, is a large cave known by the name of Grotta Regina (**FIGURE 61**). It is located at a height of 130 m. above sea level, facing north and accessible with difficulty through a winding path. The cave is about 50 m. deep, 20 m. at its widest extent and 15 m. high (**FIGURE 62**). Interest in the cave was shown in November 1968 when Father Benedetto Rocco of Palermo was taken there by Vittorio Giustolisi to see some inscriptions. Giustolisi had earlier reported the find to the local Soprintendenza who, however, thought were fakes, despite the fact that similar caves in the area (Grotta delle Vitelle, Grotta Perciata, Grotta del Capraio, Grotta dei Vaccari) were known to be of prehistoric date. Rocco proceeded to make a study of some of the inscriptions, publishing his results where he claimed that the cave served as a sanctuary from the sixth century BC for coastal inhabitants; a massive boulder inside the cave would have served as a 'table for votive offerings' (Rocco 1968, 1969b). Rocco's work led to the setting up of a research project by the *Soprintendenza* of Palermo in collaboration with the Institute of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Rome. A first survey was carried out between 8 and 19 July 1969: this included the digging of a number of sondages and a preliminary examination of some of the inscriptions. The results were published the same year (*Grotta Regina I*). Another more thorough investigation of the corpus of inscriptions was carried out in 1972 and 1975 led by Maria Giulia Guzzo Amadasi, and the final results were published in 1979 (*Grotta Regina II*). During this time, Rocco conducted his own study of the inscriptions inside the cave and published the results (Rocco 1969a, 1969c, 1969d, 1971a, 1971b, 1973, 1974). A synthesis of his work was also published (Rocco 1977).[1]

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[1] Benedetto Rocco laments the fact that the Institute in Rome and the Palermo *Soprintendenza* negated him any collaboration. He also points out (1977: 82) that the publication of his first article (1969b) caused problems to the editorial board of the newly-found journal (*Sicilia Archaeologica*) who

Six sondages were made inside the cave in areas which were free of rubble and roof collapse in order, according to the excavator, to get an idea of the stratigraphy (*Grotta Regina I*: 18-30). The excavation did not reveal any significant material, with the exception of some prehistoric (Neolithic and Bronze Age) and Punic pottery, and it is difficult to understand the meaning of the word stratum (*strato*) since digging appears to have been conducted in spits (*tagli*). The archaeologists noted that the inscriptions were located all around the walls of the cave (**FIGURE 62**), at a height ranging between 1.40 - 3.60 m. above the present level (*Grotta Regina II*: figs. 1, 2). This suggested to them that the cave must have been cleared some time after the inscriptions were written on the walls, lowering the floor level (*Grotta Regina I*: 9). This would also explain the dearth of archaeological material recovered within. Chemical analysis showed that the inscriptions were written in a bitumen-based material on a chalky layer (*Grotta Regina I*: 9). The only other find was only made in 1978 when a group of students visited the cave and recovered the lower part of a closed pottery vessel inscribed with Punic letters. Garbini who published the inscription read *'b sdny*: *'b* (?) of Sidon (1983: 99-102).

The most important datum from Grotta Regina remains the number of inscriptions written on its walls in what appears to be charcoal: seventy have been studied, alongside a number of drawings depicting animals, humans, ships, and the so-called "Sign of Tanit". However, all the epigraphists who have worked in the cave have remarked how difficult it is to read the letters written on a very uneven surface, especially when some inscriptions were written on others (*Grotta Regina II*: 14-16; Rocco 1977: 84-85) (**FIGURE 63**). The reading and dating of the inscriptions varies: Rocco dates the earliest inscriptions to the seventh century BC while Guzzo Amadasi prefers a date later by two centuries on account of the forms of the letters (Rocco 1969b: 21; 1977: 86; *Grotta Regina II*: 100-106). Both agree, however, that the inscriptions are of a votive and dedicatory nature, and the invocation of the blessing of

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were instructed not to publish anything related to Grotta Regina in subsequent issues. Giovanni Garbini (1983: 100) also notes that the 'official publications' (*Grotta Regina I*, *Grotta Regina II*) fail to give credit to Giustolisi for making the first discoveries at the cave. Rocco's work is reviewed criticially by Guzzo Amadasi in *Grotta Regina II*.

the Phoenician god Shadrapha has been read a number of times (*Grotta Regina I*: 40); the name of the Egyptian goddess Isis is possibily present in one case dated to the second-first centuries BC (Inscription 29; *Grotta Regina II*: 91, 93-100). Rocco has noted that the name of Isis is related to the depiction of a Punic warship nearby, and sees here the representation of the *navigium Isidis*, the feast which heralded the beginning of the sailing season in Spring (Rocco 1969b: 23-26). Following on a study of the depiction of the warship by Bartoloni (1978; see critique by Purpura 1979) Guzzo Amadasi doubts the connection with the *navigium Isidis*, but accepts that Isis was the patron goddess of navigation at the time so that a mariner could have invoked her inside the cave for protection (*Grotta Regina II*: 97).

The nature of the inscriptions has led many to classify the cave as a sanctuary of sorts: like Rocco and Guzzo Amadasi, Moscati and Grottanelli thought it was an extra-urban sanctuary visited by mariners who moored in the nearby bay (Moscati 1977: 109; Grottanelli 1981b: 113), while Fantar thinks it is simply a 'sanctuaire rupestre' (1986: 58; also Acquro 1993: 83). Lipinski accepts the sacred nature of the place but claims that, 'il est cependant pas possible de se faire un idée du genre de culte qui lui était rendu dans la grotte' (1995a: 32, 196, 423-4; see also Falsone 1995: 689).

3.7.3 Monte Adranone

Site visit: 12 April 1997

Reported: de Miro & Fiorentini 1976-1977; Fiorentini 1980

Published: —

Description. Between Agrigento and Selinus in Sicily is Monte Adranone. Reaching a height of about 1000 m., the mountain dominates the village of Sambuca di Sicilia lying at its foot to the S (**FIGURE 64**). Annual excavation campaigns carried out on the summit since 1968 by Ernesto de Miro and Graziella Fiorentini of the Agrigento Soprintendenza uncovered vast remains of a Greek city founded in the sixth century BC. A colony of nearby Selinus, it is most probably to be identified with Adranon mentioned by the Greek historian Diodorus in relation to the first Punic war (de Miro 1967). Inaccessible on three sides because of steep ravines, access to the city was from the S by the necropolis. The settlement is set on the sloping summit on what the excavators refer to as 'terraces'. On the summit is the 'Acropolis' (Fiorentini 1995: 5-7). During the course of the excavation, the archaeologists reported the discovery of two Punic sanctuaries, the first above the 'Acropolis' on the 'High Place' (*luogo alto*) (1975-1976 campaign) and another on Terrace II (1978 campaign). Only preliminary notes have been published of these two buildings (de Miro & Fiorentini 1976-1977; Fiorentini 1980) together with detailed entries in a guidebook to the site (Fiorentini 1995), despite the importance they are accorded in the literature as *fossile directeurs* of the Punic presence and acculturation in Greek Sicily (Tusa 1988b: 200; Lipinski 1992: 298 (but absent in Lipinski 1995a); Falsone 1995: 684).

Punic Temple at the High Place.

This is rectangular building constructed at the base of a prominent sloping rock outcrop which is the highest point of the entire mountain (de Miro & Fiorentini 1976-1977: 452, plates 44-45; Fiorentini 1980: 908-909, figs 3-10, plates 1, 2; Fiorentini 1982-1983) (**FIGURE 65b**). The building, founded some time in the fourth century BC, measures 10 by 31 m. overall and is divided into three rooms with their

respective entrances on the long S side where the threshold slabs have been located; it is oriented NNE-SSW. The wide entrance to the central room is likely to have been divided into two by a pillar as suggested by a low plinth found midway in the opening. In the central room (*vano* 2), which measures 10 by 15 m., the excavators reported the discovery of two sandstone blocks (measuring 1 by 1 m., 0.40 m. high) aligned on the major axis of the room. The carefully cut blocks were found lying on top of respective areas made of stone slabs; the rest of the floor consisted of pounded marl. The upper surface of the blocks was fashioned into a circle to serve as a base for uprights. Traces of burning were noticed along the edges of the blocks. The excavators suggest that the central room was not roofed since only a few roof tiles were found within, and that the walls were probably built of mudbrick above low foundations of marl blocks as suggested by the deep deposit of clay found on the floor along the NE and SW walls of the building. The rooms (*vano*/Room 1, *vano*/Room 3) flanking the central space were probably roofed as suggested by the large amount of roof tiles found within. An Egyptianising cornice block was found in the central room near the common wall of Room 1 (Fiorentini 1980: fig. 9; 1995: fig. 5) suggesting to the excavators a mixture of Greek and Punic architectural elements in the building's facade (Fiorentino 1980: 911, note 8; 1995: 26, n. 10). A reconstruction of the front elevation was also attempted (Fiorentino 1980: plate 7) (**FIGURE 65a**).

According to the excavators the building constituted 'a sacred complex' (*un complesso sacro*) or temple on the basis of its tripartite plan, orientation, and location (de Miro & Fiorentini 1976-1977: 452). The tripartite plan recalled various examples of sacred architecture in the Phoenician homeland (Fiorentini 1995: 25 note 8) and more specifically in Punic Sardinia, including Antas (Fiorentini 1980: 909, note 6) and the temple at Capo San Marco in Tharros (Fiorentini 1995: 25, n. 9, following a remark by Ciasca 1982-1983: 185). The two blocks uncovered in the central elongated room were interpreted by the excavators as sacred stones or baetyls: 'ritual conical pilasters' (*pilastri conici rituali*) (de Miro & Fiorentini 1976-1977: 452), 'conical baetyls' (*betili conici*) (Fiorentini 1980: 909), 'ritual baetyls' (*betili rituali*) (Fiorentini 1995: 27). Fiorentini refused to see in them a utilitarian function on account of the traces of burning on their top surfaces. Moreover, the slab flooring on which they

were placed was found covered in ash, bone and animal teeth suggesting sacrificial rites probably associated with a divine couple (1980: 910-911; 1995: 27-28).

In a second building phase during the course of the fourth century BC, the building was enlarged: another room (*vano*/Room 4) was added at the W end together with two walls protruding from the walls at either end of the building. An alignment of five stone blocks found parallel to the building's facade suggested to the excavators the existence of a portico composed of wooden columns. A system of canals was also introduced to collect rainwater in a small ritual basin (*vaschetta rituale*) and another large rectangular cistern (measuring 8 by 5 m.) uncovered opposite the alleged temple; the water would have been used in ritual ablutions (Fiorentino 1980: 911-913; 1995: 27-28).

Punic Temple on Terrace II.

Another Punic sacred complex was identified by Graziella Fiorentini on Terrace II (Fiorentini 1980: 913-915, figs 11-17, plate 2; 1995: 29, figs 40-44). This consists of a rectangular building (measuring 8 by 21 m.) with its major axis oriented NE-SW (**FIGURE 66**). The building is divided into two rooms (*vano*/Room 1: measuring 8 by 6.50 m.; *vano*/Room 2: measuring 8 by 11.50 m.) with a separate entrance to each room on the long NW side. Along the NE wall of the smaller room (1) were three sandstone basins used for ritual ablutions. Another could still be buried underneath the collapse of a wall that was preserved *in situ* by the archaeologists (1980: fig. 14). In the larger room, the excavator uncovered two baetyls (*betili a pilastro*) placed above a rectangular sandstone base, set a small distance from the back wall of the room and aligned parallel to it. A rectangular sandstone 'altar' (*ara*) was uncovered in front of one of the baetyls. Upon excavation, the floor appeared to be covered with a thick layer of burnt patches and animal bones including knucklebones. Two hundred Siculo-Punic coins of the fourth-third centuries BC were also recovered. A large rectangular cistern (measuring 14.60 by 6.50 m.) was revealed to the SE of the building, suggesting to the excavator that it served the ritual needs of the nearby sanctuary centred, like the other temple, around a divine couple on account of the twin baetyls (Fiorentini 1995: 29).

Discussion. The conclusions drawn by de Miro and Fiorentini from their discoveries at Monte Adranone have received diverse response. Acquaro (1993: 100-101) repeats what was described above, as does Rossignoli (1992: 86-87), while Falsone (1995: 684) cites only one Punic temple, not two, without giving reasons for this. Picard (1982-1983: 184-185) has criticised Fiorentini's identification of a divine couple inside the temples on lack of evidence. On at least one occasion, the alleged temples at Monte Adranone with their baetyls and rectangular cistern were taken to infer Punic influence on a Talayotic monument (Ses Antigors de Ses Salines) in Mallorca (Guerrero, Plantalamor & Rita 1986: 372-373, fig. 6). More constructive criticism has come from Ciasca (1982-1983) who has remarked that what was identified as an Egyptianising cornice block is not similar to other examples found elsewhere in central Mediterranean Punic sites. When asking about the type of pottery recovered Ciasca was told by Fiorentini that no Punic pottery was recovered on any part of the site (Fiorentini 1982-1983: 186). Tusa has ascribed to the opinions of the excavators in a number of publications (1982-1983: 132-133; 1988b: 200) but recently (1995: 464-465) he scathed the issue of Punic presence at Monte Adranone by simply saying that, '[...] i colleghi di quella Soprintendenza hanno ritenuto di avere indviduato elementi di cultura punica', without commenting or making clear his stand.

Going by what was discussed in CHAPTER II, it is very difficult to present a case for which the buildings described above can be seen as having had a religious function. Leaving aside at this stage the criteria adopted by the excavators concerning the orientation and plan of the buildings, their religious status has been defended on the basis of the alleged baetyls inside. However, a plausible argument can be put forward whereby the blocks can be seen simply as plinths for wooden roof supports or columns. The burning and scatter of ash around the blocks could simply be the result of the column and part of the roof burning down, rather than the material remains of sacrificial rites. Indeed, a good look at the plan of the building on the 'high place' shows that the internal divisions are such that the maximum roof span to be covered does not exceed 5 m. The blocks are placed exactly where columns would be expected to carry the roof. In presenting their case, the authors are simply pushing their argument too far, adopting to choose a ritual interpretation when a utilitarian function

is so apparent. Indeed, Fiorentini herself suggested the use of wooden columns for the portico, and of another wooden column to span the wide doorway to the central room of the edifice (see reconstruction drawing: **FIGURE 65a**) (1980: 909, 912). The slab floor underneath only served to bear the weight and pressure of the structural upright and roof. As for the animal bones recovered we lack information regarding the stratigraphy, the depth of deposit, and details of the zoological remains, to be able to understand by what natural or cultural process they came to be deposited there. Indeed, depending on what has been published about the site, and taking it in isolation, it is impossible to present even a plausible case for a religious interpretation of the building at the 'high place'. It is true that the relatively large dimensions of the building could mark it out as 'special', but no evidence whatsoever was uncovered which would imply action directed towards a divinity.

As for the alleged Punic temple on Terrace II, the same arguments presented above hold as well. The authors do not specify why the two sandstone bases each surmounted by a block should be interpreted as baetyls: they simply impose the conclusions reached for the temple at the 'high place' on the structures uncovered on this terrace. The minimum distance to span the roof without supports here is 8 m. and it is not impossible to think of the upright blocks as parts of the structural supports of the roof to reduce the span to about 5 m. Their position, however, set towards the back wall is odd, although they do recall the four uprights in the cistern nearby. As for the sandstone basins set against the E wall of the smaller room, seeing a religious use is certainly fortuitous: the holes on the upper ledges of each basin suggest that animals were tethered to the basins which served as containers of food or drink for the animals. Similar basins were excavated elsewhere on Monte Adranone and these were interpreted as forming part of an industrial set-up (Fiorentini 1995: 12, fig. 31). It is not impossible to think of animals tethered here before being sacrificed in some ritual in the adjacent room, but as with the previous building, the whole issue remains unconvincing. The Siculo-Punic coins recovered would imply some sort of wealth but not necessarily the payment of ritual services as suggested by the excavators. On the basis of the published information, we simply lack the evidence to justify seeing ritual action taking place here.

3.7.4 Temple of Cappiddazzu, Motya

Site visit: 15 October 1995

Reported: Whitaker 1921; *Motya 1955*; *Mozia I-IV, VI, VIII, IX*

Published: —

Description. On the small island of San Pantaleo, located in the middle of a shallow bay or lagoon to the north of Marsala (the ancient Lilybaeum) in western Sicily, is situated the Phoenician settlement of Motya (**FIGURE 67**). Mentioned in the Classical sources, this was the base used by the Carthaginians to inflict war on the Greeks in Sicily until it was destroyed by Dionysius of Syracuse in 398 BC (see *Motya 1974*: 3). Antiquarian interest in the site is recorded from the seventeenth century AD onwards following the identification of Motya with the island of San Pantaleo (*Motya 1974*: 3-13). The traveller Jean Houel visited the island and made an illustration of some of the ancient remains that he published (Houel 1782: vol. 1, plate 9). Various excavations are known to have taken place towards the end of the nineteenth century undertaken on behalf of the Commissione delle Antichità di Sicilia. Heinrich Schliemann excavated at Motya for a few days in October 1875, uncovering only few remains which he describes in a diary now preserved in Athens. Schliemann left Motya abruptly because there was '[...] nothing to find and no historical riddle to solve [...]' (*Motya 1974*: 108-110). Large scale excavations were undertaken by Joseph Whitaker between 1906 and 1919, aided by Professor A. Salinas, Director of the Archaeological Museum in Palermo, and Chev. Giuseppe Lipari-Cascio. Whitaker, a rich British industrialist from nearby Marsala, bought the island and built a museum to house the antiquities. In 1921, he published a seminal account of his archaeological activities on the island (Whitaker 1921). It was in this volume that the first mention is made of the so-called '"Cappiddazzu" ruins' where excavations were conducted between 23 April and 17 March 1913 (1921: 131, 202-205, plan G; see Tusa 1965a: 22) (**FIGURE 68a**).[1] Lying at the end of the road leading

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1 Whitaker (1921: 202 n. 1) explains the possible origin of the uneuphonious name: 'The name Cappiddazzu, the Sicilian for *Cappellazzo*, meaning a large hat, appears to have attached itself to this locality in consequence of the legend of a spectre wearing a large hat, the ghost of a hermit at Motya,

from the north gateway into the island, at what is actually the highest point (**FIGURE 67**), Whitaker describes the ruins: '[they] cover a considerable area [...] a portion of them would seem to have formed the foundations and basement of an edifice of considerable size and importance [...]'. He also notes that the foundations were built over at a later period, 'one apparently subsequent to Motya's destruction'. Whitaker did not dismantle the newer constructions which he thought appeared 'to have formed dwellings of small importance and somewhat inferior workmanship' probably in the Saracenic occupation of Sicily. Whitaker suggested that the series of parallel walls of 'good construction' uncovered could have formed part of 'a temple or sanctuary', and that a 'square basin' sunk in the floor in the SE corner 'might have served the purpose of a sacrificial font'. He noted, however, that the lack of 'remains of columns or other similar architectural work' could hardly justify '[...] entertaining the opinion that such a building existed here'. He concludes by saying: 'For the present, therefore, and until further exploration may have thrown further and clearer light on the point, this question must remain in abeyance, and we must content ourselves with looking upon these ruins as having simply belonged to some important public building.' This would be warranted, he added, by the fine workmanship of the construction at a time when the city was at its zenith.

Excavations at Cappiddazzu, financed by Whitaker, were renewed during May 1930 by two Italians, Professor Pirro Marconi assisted by Ignazio Messina from the Palermo museum. The work was never published but an account (*relazione*) of the work undertaken written by Messina is preserved at the *Soprintendenza* (Tusa 1965a: 23-31).[2] The account, sub-titled 'Exploration of a great Phoenician temple' (*Esplorazione di un grande tempio fenicio*), relates how the excavations were aimed at uncovering the plan of the edifice and to date the various structural remains. An area equivalent to 354 m.² was cleared and remains dating to what Messina calls the third (Roman Imperial) and fourth (Byzantine/Arab) phases were removed to uncover earlier constructions: a first Phoenician phase and a second Hellenistic phase. Messina

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having been supposed to haunt the neighbourhood. Possibly some scarecrow, put up to frighten off the birds from the corn-fields, may have given rise to the tale.'

believed that their work allowed them to classify the remains of the first and second phases: a tri-cella temple built of ashlar masonry, of an overall rectangular plan (measuring 21.76 by 16 m.) with the major axis oriented SE-NW, attached to a vestibule or *pronaos* and a *temenos*. Excavating in an area to the NE of the main building, within the temenos, Messina noted various architectural remains including cornice blocks, and a rectangular sandstone block (measuring 1.25 by 0.60 by 0.395 m.) perforated by a cylindrical hole in the middle (0.35 m. in diameter) and semi-circular ones at the side. The end cuttings extend the whole depth of the block whereas the central perforation is shallower (Tusa 1968a: 27-28). A channel on the top of the block joins the three perforations. The block is set in a rectangular trench in 'the ancient level' (*sul piano antico*) lined with small blocks of a 'late phase' (*di epoca tarda*). A sketch-plan of the remains uncovered by Marconi seems to have been drawn up by Thomas Ashby, who was a friend of Joseph Whitaker (*Mozia I*: fig. 4). In it, Ashby includes the area previously excavated by Whitaker and parts of the tripartite edifice, still covered over by later remains which were subsequently removed.[3]

An archaeological expedition from Oxford University led by Benedict S. J. Isserlin heralded new interest in Motya's past. The aim of the campaign, which was carried out between 16 July and 21 August 1955, was to dig a number of trenches to test the stratification in selected parts of the island with a view to check on the potential of large-scale excavation. A preliminary report of the work was published a few years later (*Motya 1955*). One trench, measuring 3 by 2 m., was dug in the SW corner of the central aisle of the Cappiddazzu building (**FIGURE 70**). In the report

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[2] The whole extract is included in Tusa 1965a: 23-30, entitled: *Scavi eseguiti nell'area di "Cappiddazzu" sotto la direzione di P. Marconi dal 1° al 31 maggio 1930: relazione dell'Assistente I. Messina.*

[3] Tusa was shown the plan by Whitaker's daughter. Tusa (1965a: 22 n. 3) did not exclude the possibility that Ashby's sketch-plan was made immediately after Whitaker's 1913 excavations. Ashby's name appears in the visitor's book on the island between 18 and 25 May 1913. However, I do not think that this is the case. Whitaker's plan published in his book (1921: 203 plan G) shows very clearly the extent of excavation to the NW, which does not include the tripartite building, save for its NE corner (compare **FIGURES 68a** and **b**). Moreover, in the text, Whitaker makes reference to a solidly built wall on the NE side and similar ones at right angles to it on the SE and NW sides, 'though how far they extend has not yet been positively determined'. Marconi's excavation covering 354 m.^{2} would be equivalent to the area between the first excavations by Whitaker and the later excavations by Tusa and his team.

Isserlin provides a list of the 32 strata encountered alongside an annotated section drawing (1958: 12-15, fig. 6, plate 3a). The drawing shows how the foundation trench for the ashlar wall of the Cappiddazzu building cuts through a number of strata (1-13). The pottery recovered from these strata suggested to Isserlin a date for the building of the ashlar wall around the fifth century BC, since all the imported Greek pottery (Corinthian and East Greek) were sixth century or a bit earlier (1958: 14-15; *Motya 1955*: 25-28). The trench allowed the excavators to note that the ashlar building was the latest construction on this part of the site, with its foundations partly built using earlier building material. This was preceded by an earlier construction of rubble walls. The earliest activity was marked by the digging of a pit. In this preliminary report, Isserlin gave no opinion regarding the function of the Cappiddazzu remains, deciding to call it simply a 'building'.

A further programme of excavations was carried out annually for about a month in each of the years 1961, 1962 and 1963 by a joint expedition of the University of Leeds, the Institute of Archaeology of the University of London and, for the last season, the Fairleigh Dickinson University at New Jersey. The project was directed by Isserlin and Joan du Plat Taylor. A preliminary report of the work was published (*Motya 1964*) but no work was carried out on the Cappiddazzu remains. By the time the first volume of the final report was published (*Motya 1974*) the religious nature of the remains was no longer brought into question, and the authors speak of the 'Cappiddazzu temple at Motya' (Isserlin & Nuttall 1974: 96; also Isserlin 1974: 40-44).

Italian activity at Motya was renewed in 1964. The long-term project was a collaboration between the Institute of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Rome led by Sabatino Moscati and the *Soprintendenza* of Western Sicily led by Vincenzo Tusa. Excavations within the Cappiddazzu area were in fact conducted by Tusa who drew up the preliminary report for each excavation season (Tusa 1965b, 1966b, 1967, 1968, 1970a, 1973a, 1978). In the first report, Tusa identifies the ruins at Cappiddazzu with 'sacred buildings' (*edifici sacri di "Cappiddazzu"*; 1965a: 31), an assertion which he has often repeated in various publications (Tusa 1970b, 1988b, 1989b), and

which remains unchallenged. The tripartite building is identified with a Phoenician temple with its typical tripartite divisions mentioned in the Bible (*'ulam*, *hekal*, *debir*), attached to a rectangular area (measuring 27.40 by 35.40 m.) or *temenos* (also Bisi 1968: 50). With regards to the perforated, rectangular block set in the ground, uncovered by Marconi and Messina to the SE of the building, Tusa put forward the hypothesis that this could be a base for three wooden or stone baetyls connected with the earliest phase of the complex at Cappiddazzu (**FIGURES 69a, 71**). It would have been placed in front of the temple, at the entrance to the *temenos*, to mark the "sacredness" of the area (1965a: 40, plate 31).

Work on the Cappiddazzu remains included the following: the provisional dating of the rectangular temenos wall to the seventh-sixth centuries BC (Tusa 1965b: 37); a study of the late structures overlying the Cappiddazzu *temenos* in a newly excavated area to the S of the tripartite edifice, including structural phasing of the remains spanning the fourth century BC - fifth/sixth century AD (Tusa 1966b; fig. 3) (**FIGURE 69b**); an extension of the area of excavation to the SW of the tripartite building recovering an Egyptianising cavetto capital (Tusa 1967: 9, fig. 1, plate 5.1)[4]; excavations within the naves of the tripartite building (Tusa 1970a: 24-45, 1973a) and outside (Tusa 1970a: 8-24). The trenches dug within the naves, including an extension to the limited sondage made by the Oxford team in 1955, brought the excavation of Cappiddazzu to an end ('riteniamo definito quindi lo scavo'; Tusa 1973a: 7, 29) (**FIGURES 71, 72**). In the 1971 report, Tusa draws together the results achieved after a number of campaigns, to present a definite picture of the history of events at the 'sacred area' at Cappiddazzu, while pointing out that the results might be subject to modifications once the final report is published (1973a: 29-31). The earliest activity at Cappiddazzu was the digging of elliptical-shaped pits in the rock. Tusa remarks that the use of such pits is not clear but he suggests that they could have been used for religious sacrifices. He seeks support for his argument by pointing out that religious ritual persisted in later times in this area, and that the pit contained animal bones.[5]

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[4] The capital measures 1.15 m. square at the top, 0.58 by 0.68 m. at the base, and is 0.55 m. high (Tusa 1967: 9). A similar capital was retrieved from the excavations at Tas-Silg, Malta.

[5] Tusa (1973a: 30): '[...] l'uso di queste fosse non è chiaro e avanziamo l'ipotesi che esse fossero utilizzate per sacrifici ed avessero quindi valore sacro: la nostra ipotesi è fondata sulla persistenza di un

The next event, to be dated to the second half of the seventh century BC, was the construction of a 'religious building' (*edificio sacro*) made of rubble, traces of which were uncovered in at least two naves. A small well (*pozzo*) was also uncovered. The main ashlar tripartite building was built next but Tusa refuses to supply a date for lack of evidence. He points out, however, that the Egyptianising cavetto cornice blocks used in its foundation,[6] together with similar ones employed as building stone in the towers next to Motya's North Gate, suggest a date before the destruction of Motya by Dionysius I, possibly in the fifth century BC. The geneal picture drawn by Tusa has been accepted by Isserlin (1974), who however laments that the lack of section drawings in the preliminary reports makes a comparison between Tusa's description of strata and the earlier work at the Cappiddazzu difficult.

Discussion. The development of the alleged religious site at Cappiddazzu as described by Vincenzo Tusa has been accepted by many scholars: Cappiddazzu is in fact listed as a sanctuary site in all standard works dealing with the Phoenicians in the western Mediterranean (see **Table 1.1**; also Tusa 1988b: 188; Acquaro 1993: 91; Aubet 1994: 204-205; Gras *et al.* 1995: 323). The doubts expressed regarding its unclear nature and its dating when it was uncovered (e.g. Harden 1962: 37 followed closely by Moscati 1968d: 252) have long disappeared from the literature, with the exception of a few remarks by Ciasca (comments to Isserlin 1982: 16) who refuses to tackle the site in a note about religious architecture at Motya (1980: 504). Fantar (1986: 58) considered the ashlar building a sanctuary on account of its tripartite plan, corresponding to '[...] sans doute, le pronaos, le naos et le Saint des Saints'. Culican (1991: 501) agreed too that the building 'appears to have been a tri-cella temple with an open temenos in which votive deposits were made, and stelae were erected from archaic times' (also Falsone 1992a: 302). Isserlin himself accepted the conclusions reached by Tusa and sought parallels for the layout of the temple in Etruria, noting however, that axially arranged sanctuaries preceded by a courtyard are known in Cyprus, especially at Kition (Isserlin 1974; 1982: 124). Moreover, Falsone has added

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luogo sacro in quel posto e ulla considerevole quantità di ossa di animali, bovini ed ovini, rinvenute sia nelle fosse stesse che in tutta l'area sacra che abbiamo scavato.'

[6] These are marked [275] and [322] in Section BB, **FIGURE 72.**

that the reutilised Egyptianising cornice blocks could have belonged to a previous religious construction dating to the sixth/fifth centuries BC (Falsone 1995: 688).

Despite the certitude with which Cappiddazzu is included in the list of Phoenician and Punic sanctuary sites, we have to establish that on the basis of the available evidence we are indeed justified in classifying the area of Cappiddazzu as religious. In fact, I will argue that taking the site in isolation enough information is available to bring into question Tusa's conclusions and hypothesis regarding the religious nature of the remains.[7]

A close reading of Tusa's contributions about Cappiddazzu shows that he does not define clearly the reasons *why* the buildings uncovered there are religious: Messina's earlier conclusions are simply accepted without proper justification, while Whitaker's reservations are ignored. Furthermore, he identifies as religious installations and features for which other utilitarian functions can be found. These are: the block of stone identified with a base for three baetyls, and the alleged 'sacrificial pits' uncovered in the archaic levels in the nave (**FIGURE 71**). Let us examine these more closely.

First the base for the three baetyls. As we have seen above, this structure was uncovered by Messina who did not comment on its function. Tusa suggested that it *could* have had a religious function in his first report. The caption to a plate showing the perforated block in Tusa's contribution to a Rome conference held a few years later describes it as a 'platform for three baetyls' (*piattaforma per tre betili*) (1970b: plate 10): the uncertainity soon disappeared and Tusa has taken the same stand since (see Tusa 1989b: 32). Despite her wrong description of the structure, Bisi (1968: 52, plate 5) accepted Tusa's interpretation of it, arguing that the 'baetylic triad' originated in the Phoenician homeland, thus showing the strong religious ties Sicily had with the

[7] The critique which follows is obviously based on the preliminary reports. A final report is not available yet, despite having been announced by the excavator many times (Tusa 1982: 130; 1995: 456).

Levant.[8] In a recent semi-popular book on the history of religions a full-page colour photograph of the perforated block is captioned thus: 'remains of a sacifical altar of the Punic civilization [...] the altar was part of a sanctuary.' (Ries 1994: fig. 187) Tusa's interpretation, however, has been brought into question: Isserlin notes (1974: 43) that 'Professor Tusa's baetyls [...] if proven' would hardly be sufficient to throw light on the cultic installations at Cappiddazzu, while Shaw (1989: 179) observes that the incomplete perforations at the end of this 'unusual' and 'curious structure' defeat a practical solution leaving '[...] the purpose of the channel unexplained and the whole proposal remains unconvicing' (also Rossignoli 1992: 85, plate 2.1). But a practical solution for this structure *does* in fact exist: such a block is usually associated with an olive-oil production centre. Similar structures are known throughout Greek and Roman sites in the Mediterranean and they are vividly described by the Roman authors (White 1984: 67-71; 1975: 225-233). In an early system (the lever-press), the block would have acted as a weight attached by thongs or ropes to the end of a long wooden lever (*prelum*) thereby applying pressure on the olive pulp placed on a basin (**FIGURE 73a**). The side perforations would have housed an inverted wooden U-frame from which to attach thongs or ropes. A capstan was sometimes installed too with the block anchored firmly in the ground (see White 1984: fig. 58). In a later system (the lever-and-screw press), a wooden screw was attached to the end of the lever and the stone block (in a cylindrical perforation). By turning the screw the weight would lower the beam (**FIGURE 73b**). The block at Motya would have incorporated the two systems, just like similar ones uncovered by the Italian archaeologists in Malta at the Roman farmstead of San Pawl Milqi (Rossignani 1965); moreover, the block would have been buried in the ground (see Mattingly 1990: fig. 10). Opposite the block, the press would include a basin for the collection of the oil. Such a basin (*vasca*) exists at Motya opposite the perforated block. It was uncovered by Tusa in the second excavation campaign (1965), to the west of space (*vano*) III (**FIGURE 69b**). It measures 1.80 by 0.90 m. and is 1.45 m. deep. Inside the plaster-lined basin is a

[8] Bisi describes the base as made from four blocks, which is not the case. Bisi repeated her interpretation of the structure in a conference published posthumously (1991: 229, 233, plate 66b). The caption to the plate reads: 'Motyé, autel dans le bâtiment à trois nefs'. Even this is wrong because the structure is located outside the tripartite building.

tronco-conic settling vat (*fossetta di decantazione*; Tusa 1966b: 21, fig. 3, plate18).[9] The pottery retrieved from within the basin was dated to the fourth-fifth centuries AD, but pottery from the adjacent area (*vano* III) was dated to the first-second centuries AD. Such a late date would even tally with Messina's observations that the masonry employed to line the trench for the perforated block belonged to a 'late phase' (*epoca tarda*, i.e. Roman or later), a remark which Tusa obviously overlooked. On account of these observations, I would propose that claims by Tusa and others regarding the religious nature of the installation are no longer tenable.

As for the 'sacrificial pits' uncovered while digging within the central nave of the ashlar building, Tusa defended their association with religious activities on the basis of the animal bones recovered from within and because they were covered over by an alleged religious building at a later time (see Falsone 1995: 688). But it is interesting to note that similar pits were found elsewhere at Motya, about 100 m. NW from the ashlar building, at a place dubbed in the preliminary reports 'Luogo di Arsione' ('the place of cremation'). The excavator here was Tusa who suggested that the pits were connected with the adjacent necropolis and tophet, and that they were used to cremate the corpses (1972: 34, figs. 2-4). However, in subsequent reports Tusa doubted his original interpretation (1973b: 35, fig. 5; 1978: 8, fig. 4) after suggestions from Ciasca that the area was used for industrial purposes, probably for dyeing, on account of the large number of murex shells recovered. Pottery kilns were also uncovered in the same area. Tusa has now accepted this opinion (1989a: 39-40). Both the pits at the 'Luogo di Arsione' and at the Cappiddazzu were dug into the rock and were plastered by a layer of greyish-green clay, contained animal bone and marine shells (especially murex), pottery mostly in fragments, terracotta weights, and were surrounded by low rubble walls (see Tusa 1973a: 26). The probability, is therefore, that the pits were associated with an industrial installation.

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[9] Indeed, it has to be said that Tusa put forward his hypothesis regarding the religious nature of the installation *before* the basin in *vano* III was uncovered (compare *Mozia I*: fig. 7 with *Mozia II*: fig. 3) (compare **FIGURES 69a, 69b**) so that the connection would perhaps have been more obvious. However, Tusa never revised his interpretation.

As for the tri-partite ashlar building itself, we have no information whatsoever regarding the layers which covered it and excavated by Marconi and Messina. A case can hardly be made to justify the remains as belonging to a religious edifice given the lack of information. As to whether the plan follows a special canon of religious architecture consideration will be given in the next chapter.

3.7.5 Solunto (Monte Catalfano)

Site visit: 14 October 1995

Reported: Tusa 1966a

Published: Famà 1980

Description and discussion. About 20 km. E of Palermo is an archaeological site situated on the slopes of a rocky headland (Monte Catalfano; 397 m above sea level). It was thought that the town laid out on a grid plan was the site of *Solóeis* (the Latin *Soluntum*, Italian *Solunto*) which, together with Panormus (Palermo) and Motya (Isola di San Pantaleo), were mentioned by the Greek historian Thucydides as the three main Phoenician sites in Sicily. The original site of *Solóeis* is now thought to be located on the nearby promontory of Solanto and the adjacent plateau of San Cristoforo where Punic tombs have been discovered containing material dating to the sixth century BC (Culican 1991: 501; Falsone 1992b, 1995: 682; Tusa 1982-1983: 140-141, 1995: 460). Ancient sources, notably Diodorus Siculus, relate that when the ancient city was destroyed by Dionysius I of Syracuse in 397 BC, a new town was built about fifty years later, to be identified with the site on Monte Catalfano.

Excavations conducted in 1954 by the Palermo *Soprintendenza*, and subsequently reported (Tusa 1966a: 149-153; see Tusa 1995: 459-460), uncovered the remains of what the excavator, Vincenzo Tusa, identified with an altar surmounted by 'the baetyls of the Punic religion' (... *betili della religione punica*) (1966a: 151; 1970: 42). The altar is set in a room (measuring 5 m. square) at the corner of two streets (the *decumanus* and the Via Salinas) of the city (**FIGURE 74**); entrance is from the E side. The platform or altar, measuring 3.40 by 3 m. and 0.60 m. high, is set on a base built of stone blocks: part of its surface (1 by 2 m.) is covered by plaster or conglomerate, and is inclined towards a square basin (measuring 1 m. square, 0.70 m. deep), built against the platform to the NW, and found full of ash and animal bones. The W extremity of the platform is marked by three tuff slabs - the alleged baetyls - (measuring 0.80 m. high, 0.50 m. wide, 0.25 m. thick) placed vertically and set about 0.60 m. apart from each other. Tusa dated this area and the adjacent rooms to the N to

the second and third centuries AD, but noted that the same set-up must have existed before, at least since the mid-fourth century BC. In subsequent publications (Tusa 1980a: 2129-2130) Tusa held that the baetyled-altar was but a part of a large Punic sacred complex, with rooms serving various functions. The analysis of the bone fragments recovered from the basin undertaken for the *Soprintendenza* by Prof. Teodosio De Stefani (Tusa 1966a: 150 n. 1), showed that the bones belonged to a wide range of animal species: horse, donkey, boar, pig, deer, goat, sheep, bull, dog, fox, cockerel, and tuna. Incision marks on some bone fragments were taken to be the marks left by a cutting instrument when the animals were sacrificed on the altar; the blood would have gathered in the basin.

Vincenzo Tusa has repeatedly claimed (1966a, 1970b: 42; 1980b, 1982-1983: 140-143; *Solunto 1994*: 66) that this altar, together with other parts of the site,[1] is important because it shows the intermixture of Greek and Punic culture in a context which is ethnically and politically Carthaginian.

The claims made by Tusa concerning the function and chronology of the area were repeated and developed in a detailed study of the altar and adjoining rooms undertaken by Maria Luisa Famà (1980). The pottery collected from the basin consisted of Roman terra sigillata dated to the mid-first century AD; pottery collected from the room was mostly African terra sigillata dated to the second century AD. Two coins were dated to the period 317-241 BC. Famà claimed that the presence of bones in the basin left no doubts about the use of the altar for sacrifices (1980: 36). She noted, however, that the most difficult undertaking in her exercise was to try and find analogies for the religious complex: she found none, and called the tri-pillared altar an

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[1] These include: a labyrinthine building (*edificio a forma di labirinto*) located at the highest part of the site (*Solunto 1994*: 94-95, plate 32; *cf.* Tusa 1980a: plate 1.1), recalling, according to Tusa (1980: 2128-2129), the "high places" of the Bible where sacred buildings were located; a building with two naves (*edificio sacro a due navate*) (*Solunto 1994*: 81-84, plates 25-26, figs 30, 46) where a 2 m.-high statue of Zeus, in which Tusa sees a representation of the Punic god Baal Hammon (*ma che più verosimilmente è da interpretare come Baal-Hammon*), recovered from this area in 1824, is assumed to have been placed. It is not at all clear why Tusa insists on seeing Oriental traits in these structures: having the first building on the highest point of the site is hardly a sufficient criterion to argue for the presence of Semitism in an urban context which is overtly Greek. Likewise, he does not explain why Zeus should be assimilated with Baal Hammon. Bisi (1968: 35; 1991: 231) and Falsone (1995: 689) follow Tusa.

'*unicum*' (1980: 37; 1981: 136).[2] Parallels had been drawn by Tusa (1966a) with buildings at another Sicilian site, Selinunte, but Famà noted that these were 'rather vague' (*piuttosto vaghe*), resting on certain similarities (the recovery of animal bones, the presence of basins). Famà, however, argued (1980: 37-38) that it was logical to deduce that the pillars on the altar at Solunto were baetyls for no other function could explain them: 'è logico dedurre che la loro funzione sia stata esclusivamente e volutamente quella di rappresentazione simbolica della divinità.'

Both Tusa and Famà saw similarities between the tri-pillar set-up here at Solunto and the representations of what appear to be three baetyls on the stele from the tophets. So do other scholars (e.g. Falsone 1995: 689) especially Anna Maria Bisi (1991: 231-232) who discusses the structure at Solunto in the context of sacrificial monuments in the Punic West. Joseph Shaw (1989: 179 n. 56) has recalled this site, identifying it wrongly with ancient Segesta, in discussing the tri-pillar structure he uncovered at Kommos (**3.4.1**). He noted that the slabs are too far apart, unlike the representations on the stele, and that we do not know how the slabs were found during the excavation: were they restored on the platform after having been found elsewhere? This is a good point: Tusa does not say anything outright in this regard and neither does Famà, but remarks by the latter concerning the construction details of the platform and slabs suggest that they were found in position. She describes them as 'built in' the back wall of the platform (*inglobati nel muretto*) (1980: 13). The issue, however, remains open.

The point to raise is whether we are justified in seeing a religious structure here if the site is taken in isolation. The answer is limited by the type of information, or rather the lack of it, that was gathered during the excavation. Redundancy can perhaps be seen in the bones gathered in the basin, but unfortunately we do not know whether similar bones were found in deposits *outside* and *beyond* the basin: the location of the room with the tri-pillared structure, at the base of a slope, would have undoubtedly favoured the washing down of deposits from the upper reaches of the

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2 'Possiamo fin da questo mòmento affermare con assoluta certezza che, allo stato attuale delle nostre conoscenze, non esistono edifici tipologicamente e strutturalmente uguali al nostro.' (Famà 1980: 37)

hill. The platform with the three pillars placed prominently opposite the doorway, can be regarded as a kind of special facility, although of unclear purpose. Yet, it defies a utilitarian function. Interpreting it as a religious structure on the basis of external information (the representations on funerary stele) presents a good case. Taking the site in isolation, however, there is no clear answer.

3.8.1 Antas

Site visit: 12 April 1995, 18 April 1997

Reported: *Antas 1969*

Published: —

Discussion. In 1838, in the Antas valley of the mountainous territory of Fluminimaggiore, 10 km north of Iglesias in Sardinia (**FIGURE 75**), General Alberto Ferrero de La Marmora reported the discovery of numerous architectural remains belonging to what he thought must have been a temple. The remains included fragments of column drums, cornices and capitals, and parts of the architrave inscribed with a Roman inscription. La Marmora noticed that the foundations (*basamento*) of the building were still intact but since the valley was uninhabited he could not find any workers to clear the rubble and retrieve the rest of the inscribed architrave (temple *titolatura*). The following year, La Marmora sent an architect from Cagliari, Gaeatano Cima, to survey the remains and to prepare a reconstruction of the temple. Efforts to retrieve the rest of the architrave, however, proved unsuccessful. The reconstruction together with a lenghty description of the remains was published in 1840 in La Marmora's second volume of his *Voyage en Sardaigne*. At the time, La Marmora thought that the remains at Antas belonged to an extra-urban sanctuary built in the territory of the city of Metalla ('the mines') mentioned in Classical itineraries. Others however, argued that the remains could belong to the *Sardopatoros Ieron* mentioned by Ptolemy in his *Geographia*.

The interest which La Marmora had shown for Antas was revived in 1954 when a university student carrying out fieldwork retrieved another part of the architrave. A few years later another attempt at trying to comprehend the remains at Antas was undertaken by Foiso Fois. Fois carried out another accurate survey and noticed that the architectural remains lying infront of the temple were very different from the rest. He hypothesised that the Roman cult at Antas must have been preceded by a Punic one. It was only in 1966, however, during clearance works undertaken at Antas that a bronze plaque with a dedication to *Sardus Pater* and Punic inscriptions

dedicated to the god Sid threw light on the cult practised here. A decision was taken to commence systematic excavations in August 1967 and again in September 1968 by the Soprintendency of Cagliari and the Institute of Near Eastern Studies of the University of Rome under the direction of Gennaro Pesce and Sabatino Moscati. Work in the field was directed by Ferruccio Barreca, who in 1969 presented the results in a multi-authored preliminary report. He concluded that a Punic temple was built at Antas at the end of the sixth century or at the beginning of the fifth. The temple was rebuilt in the third century BC, and in a third phase, between the second and third centuries AD it was built anew as a Roman temple (Barreca 1969: 14, 45). The report also included results of the excavation of the remains of a nuragic village a few hundred meters away from the temple (Cecchini 1969). Further work carrried out on site included anastylosis of the Roman temple (finished in 1976), and resumption of excavations in an area immediately south of the temple which revealed three nuragic burial pits dating to the early Iron Age (Ugas & Lucia 1987).

Barreca's work focused on two areas: on the podium of the Roman temple, and in the area immediately infront the SE end of the temple where La Marmora had observed the monumental staircase leading to the temple (**FIGURE 75**). In the first case, however, no stratigraphic excavation seems to have been conducted. We are only told that a 'clearance' opearation (*lavoro di sbancamento*) undertaken in 1966 over the whole area removed a substantial number of architectural fragments and other finds including a dozen Punic inscriptions. The deposits were sieved for small finds, recovering small votive objects including amulets and terracotta figurines (Barreca 1969: 14). The low podium, oriented NW-SE, measured 23.25 x 9.25 m. and was constructed of limestone ashlar blocks accurately worked and laid down in regular courses. In plan, the temple consisted of a columned portico or *pronaos*, a *cella* and two smaller *cellae* (*due vani* or *penetrale*) at the NW end. The *pronaos* had four columns on the front and two on each side; the *cella* in antis, had a limestone pavement covered by mosaic in white tesserae with a band of turquoise-coloured tesserae delimiting a narrow quadrangular area in the centre. Entrance to the temple was from the SE and from two lateral symmetrical entrances in the *cella*. In the entranceway to the smaller *cellae* were two square basins with a step down one side.

Large squared blocks constitute the foundation of pilasters built against the interior walls to support the roof beams (Barreca 1969: 9, 15-19, 26, 28; Manconi 1976: 58-59).

Stratigraphic excavations were carried out in the area immediately infront of the *pronaos* with the aim of providing an 'absolute chronology' to the Punic structures there, to uncover their extent and provide a plan of the remains (Barreca 1969: 29).[1] A first sondage was in fact carried out within the area of the *pronaos* where illicit excavations using dynamites had produced a large crater. Barreca reported that beneath the podium 'no archaeological strata existed' and that there was 'no trace of a pre-existing building' (Barreca 1969: 29).[2] Excavation beyond the *pronoas*, however, uncovered a succession of archaeological strata (**FIGURE 77**). Barreca could distinguish between three strata (A, B and C) representing three building phases. These have been presented schematically in **Table 3.8** and are based on the information contained in the preliminary report (especially Barreca 1969: 30-32). Also, for ease of comprehension, Barreca's multi-phase plan (Barreca 1969: fig 2) has been annotated (**FIGURE 77**) and should be seen in conjunction with Barreca's drawings and hypothetical reconstruction in elevation of the temple (**FIGURES 78, 79**: Barreca 1969: figs. 3-6).

According to Barreca (1969: 34-36), during the earliest 'archaic-Punic' phase (stratum C: *punico arcaico*) the temple was a rectangular courtyard surrounded by a wall (9 by 18 m.) with an entrance on the short SE side (**FIGURES 78.1, 79.1**). Inside the building was a rectangular area of natural bedrock (3 by 4.25 m.) surrounded by a low wall built of limestone chippings [5]. This was the 'sacred rock' (*roccia sacra*) which functioned as an open-air altar.[3] Remains of burning and small bones were

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[1] 'Benché i materiali trovati nel corso dei lavori preparatori avessero dimostrato in maniera inequivocabile l'esistenza di una fase cartaginese del tempio alla quale poi se ne era sovrapposta una romana, solo la stratigrafia poteva consentire di precisare la cronologia assoluta del monumento e la sua planimetria in ogni singola fase.'

[2] By his use of the term 'archaeological strata' Barreca seems to imply that activities related to site formation do not in themselves constitute archaeological strata.

[3] '[...] la roccia sacra mi sembra rappresentare l'elemento costante del tempio di Antas: origine e centro spirituale del santuario. Attorno ad essa infatti gravita l'intero luogo di culto e su di essa sorge l'altare arcaico, risparmiato dalla trasformazione tardo-punica, e in un certo senso, anche da quella

found immediately to the SE of it. The space between the 'sacred rock' and the entrance to the courtyard was the vestibule (*vestibolo*). The floor of the temple must have been composed of 'a modest layer of pounded clay' lying directly over bedrock. The temple was surrounded by a low wall built of polygonal limestone blocks set in mortar of dark mud. Barreca dated the beginning of this building phase to the late sixth/early fifth centuries BC on the basis of pottery found within the layer of ash.

STRATUM	DESCRIPTION	REMARKS	DATING
humus	few cm.	various materials	
A	0.20; dark earth and heap of limestone stones; step and cocciopesto	damaged by clandestine excavations and agriculture activity; "collapse" layer	2/3rd century AD
B	0.40; sandstone chippings; ***walls of sandstone chippings*** cemented with a reddish clay mortar	fill layer serving as a foundation for the temple staircase; doric capitals; 3rd century BC inscription	end of 3rd century BC
	pounded layer of sandstone ? red clay		
C	0.15; black earth; combustion remains including small bones; ***walls of limestone chippings*** cemented with a mortar of dark mud	black earth is the result of slow deposition of ash from offerings adjacent to an altar; layer is cut by walls in stratum B	6th/5th century BC
	0.04; pounded layer of dark yellowish clay		
bedrock	*bedrock*		

Table 3.8 Schematic reconstruction of the stratigraphic sequence at Antas.

(*source*: Barreca 1969)

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romana, che gli sovrappone il nuovo altare con la sola variante di non arrivara a coprirlo interamente.' (Barreca 1969: 40)

During the second phase the temple was rebuilt and transformed while keeping untouched 'the spiritual focus of the place', the 'sacred rock' (Barreca 1969: 36-38) (**FIGURES 78.2, 79.2, 79.3**).[4] The courtyard walls were rebuilt using ashlar sandstone blocks. A wall was built to the NW of the 'sacred rock', turning the inner parts of the courtyard into a small room with another wall to the NE leaving enough space for a small entrance. The floor of this room was composed of a mixture of lime and small stones. A patch of ash found in the centre of the floor led Barreca to hypothesize that this room functioned as an inner *cella* (*penetrale*) or shrine, probably roofed, where the altar would have been placed. Elsewhere, the floor was composed of a layer of pounded reddish clay. The architectural decoration proposed in Barreca's reconstruction (1969: fig. 4; **FIGURE 79.3**) included the placing of an Egyptian cavetto cornice on each corner of the building (resembling *acroteri*), and a doorway supported or flanked by two unfluted columns crowned by Doric capitals (Barreca 1969: 42 n. 2).[5] Barreca dated this late-Punic phase to the third century BC on the basis of 'a fragment of a Punic sacrificial urn' and because the underlying layers in stratum C did not include material later than the third century BC (Barreca 1969: 31-2).[6]

A radical change took place during the third phase in the building's history (stratum B [*sic*]) (Barreca 1969: 39-40).[7] The entire surface of the walled courtyard was covered with a fill and a monumental staircase leading to a podium was built over it. The fill was in actual fact composed of a number of rectilinear walls with layers of sandstone chippings and red clay compacted in the intervening spaces (**FIGURE 77** [3], [4]; **FIGURE 78.3**). The perimeter walls reutilized the stonework from the previous phase but the SE wall was extended meeting the external wall surrounding the temple. The steps were made of ashlar sandstone blocks and the terraces were of *cocciopesto*. Barreca claims that in all probability the altar of the Roman temple was placed above

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4 '[...] il tempio dové essere ricostruito e trasformato, conservando però il suo centro spirtuale nella roccia sacra, la cui sistemazione architettonica sembra restasse quasi invariata.'

5 The Egyptianising cavetto cornices (measuring 1.30 by 0.87 m.) and the column drums (diameter 0.82 m.) were made from sandstone and were finished with stucco (Barreca 1969: 26).

6 Barreca (1969: 33) erroneously equates stratum B with the second ('late Punic') phase dating to the third century BC.

7 Barreca (1969: 33) erroneously equates stratum A with the third ('Roman') phase dating to the second/third centuries AD.

the 'sacred rock', exactly where La Marmora claims to have seen it. The ash dump from the Roman altar was also identified by Barreca, lying 4.0 m. away NE of the 'sacred rock'. Barreca dated this phase to the second/third century AD on the basis of a fragmented Roman statue found in the fill of stratum B (Barreca 1969: 31).

Discussion. Although the site has been heralded as an important dimension of Phoenician colonisation in Sardinia (Moscati 1969), it will be argued here, that despite the thoroughness with which Barreca describes the remains uncovered beyond the podium of the Roman temple, the architectural reconstructions that he proposes for the first two phases are open to question. The juxtaposition of Barreca's drawings and hypothetical reconstructions in elevation of the temple remains (Barreca 1969: figs. 3-6) makes it immediately apparent that there are a lot of discrapencies between what was *actually* found in the field and what was reconstructed on the drawing board. To be precise, it is important to stress that Barreca did point out that the remains uncovered allowed a reconstruction *only in broad outline* and that the drawings are in fact hypothetical (Barreca 1969: 27 n. 1, 34).[8] Yet, these drawings have found pride of place in at least one dictionary (Tore 1992a: 33), a guide book (Zucca 1989a: 34-5) and other publications (example, Tore 1989: 46; Lipinski 1995a: 332 and 450) which refer to the remains at Antas as a typical example of Punic religious architecture (e.g. Monte Adranone, **3.7.3**). For this reason it is important to list the problems inherent in the presentation of the data, in the arguments put forward and in the reconstruction drawings.

1. We cannot be certain that the earliest Punic remains at Antas did not continue beyond the rectangular area defined by Barreca. We are reminded twice (Barreca 1969: 29 and 34) that excavation within the *pronaos* area of the podium revealed no architectural remains *in situ* that could be associated with any building phase; but Barreca also confirms the presence of levelled rock there, a sign which elsewhere is taken to imply the existence of stone structures which no longer survive.

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[8] 'Nelle planimetrie generali delle singole fase (Figg. 3,5,6) sono segnati a scopo indicativo e con valore puramente ipotetico.'

But in this case Barreca simply refutes to elaborate and simply says that the rock cutting cannot be dated (Barreca 1969: 29). Unfortunately, no photographs or drawings of the excavation within the podium are included in the preliminary report that would allow an assessment. Also, we are told that no architectural elements survive of the W corner of the rectangular building, and yet, Barreca proposes a reconstruction for the temple measuring 9 by 18 m. because 'Punic temples in Sardinia were built to a ratio of 1:2' (Barreca 1969: 35-36 n. 3); but we are not told which temples he had in mind.[9]

2. Barreca's placement of the entrance to the Punic temple on the SE side can also be brought into question. No architectural remains, such as a threshold slab, were found suggestive of such a reconstruction (**FIGURES 77, 79**) (Barreca 1969: 35, 42).[10]

3. With regards to the extent of the rectangular wall which supposedly surrounded the temple, Barreca only says that it can be traced in certain areas, and that the entire length of the preserved parts equals 68 m. (**FIGURE 79**) It has a height of 0.35 and a thickness of 0.60 m. (Barreca 1969: 26-7). Unfortunately, however, the surviving tracts are not shown in a plan; we are only provided with a hypothetical layout (and Barreca stresses this point) corresponding to each phase of the temple's history (Barreca 1969: figs 3, 4). We are not told, however, how it was dated. The same can be said of two other structures which Barreca refers to. One is a small damaged rectangular construction (0.83 by 1.15 m.), about 9.70 m. SW of the Roman staircase. The 'presence of ash' and of 'a considerable number of Punic objects' all around it led Barreca to hypothesise that this was a small open-air altar (Barreca 1969: 28). The second structure consists of the remains of a wall that defines a rectangular area (3.30m wide) 5.20 m. NE of the temple and parallel to it. The total length of the surviving wall is 12.20 m. and the height is 0.90 m. We are told that 'research'

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[9] 'È vero che il limite nord-occidentale del cortile non si è trovato, per la presenza del podio romano, ma è anche vero che i saggi condotti sotto il pronao hanno dimostrato che il tempio punico non giungeva fin là. Inoltre, tenendo presente che i templi punici di Sardegna hanno abitualmente pianta rettangolare con proporzioni approssimativamente di 1:2, si puó ritenere che questo, largo circa m.9, ben difficilmetne potesse superare la lungehzza di m. 18.'

[10] Barreca quotes references in MS III: 58 to sustain his claim. These include the alledged temples at Capo San Marco in Tharros, tophet at Monte Sirai, Via Malta in Cagliari, Nora (adjacent to the

undertaken here brought to light 'fragments of votive statues', corroborating the hypothesis that this was 'a deposit of *ex votos*', very much like 'a superficial hoard' (Barreca 1969: 27).[11] Unfortunately, no photos of either of these two structures are included in the preliminary report. They are only drawn schematically in the reconstruction drawing corresponding to the second phase of the temple (Barreca 1969: fig. 3b) (**FIGURE 79.2**).

4. Another problem with the excavations at Antas lies in the fact that the exact find spot of excavated artefacts was not recorded. So, for example, above we have noted that 'a considerable number of Punic objects' were retrieved from the vicinity of the alledged 'altar' and that 'fragments of votive statues' were recovered outside the temple, but we are not told what type and which objects and statues the excavator is referring to. The catalogues, in fact, make no reference whatsoever to the findspot of the artefact being discussed (Acquaro 1969a, 1969b; Acquaro and D. Fantar 1969). With regards to the Punic inscriptions, Barreca reports the retieval of '*about* a dozen' of them during the clearance operations of 1966 (Barreca 1969: 14; my emphasis) but the catalogue lists 21 (Fantar 1969), including three on small artefacts which could have gone unnoticed at the first instance.[12] Only one fragment of a 'Punic votive inscription' was found during the 'stratigraphic excavations' in the fill of stratum B, but we are not told which one (Barreca 1969: 31). Further work on the inscriptions has led M.L. Uberti to join two of the inscriptions (1978) and to publish an earring inscribed with a dedication to Sid (1980). Recently, Garbini (1997) has published another four votive inscriptions from excavations renewed at Antas in 1990, but the findspot of discovery is not given.[13]

5. A final remark should be said about the chronology and the phasing of the remains beyond the podium. We have already footnoted above that Barreca equated the building phases with the wrong strata (Barreca 1969: 33). The problem lies,

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theatre), tophet at Sulcis: 'Anche questa potrebbe esser la conseguenza di una regola dell'architettura religiosa punica e sarà opportuno tener presente tale eventualità nel corso delle future ricerche'.

[11] '[...] ricerche effettuate nel suo interno, portando al ricupero di frammenti di sculture votive, hanno avvalorato l'ipotesi che si trattasse di un depostio per gli *ex voto*, simile ad una stipe superficiale.'

[12] These include an inscription on a gold earing with dedication to Sid, another on a rectangular pendant, and a two letter inscription (perhaps an abbreviation) on the base of a pot (Mh. Fantar 1969).

however, in trying to relate the remains as described in the texts and in the captioned photographs to Barreca's phasing. Unfortunately a proper reconstruction is hindered by the lack of annotated plans and sections that would show the extent of each deposit described. Also, deposits are sometimes given an ambiguous label.[14] Whereas the explanation given for phase 3 is plausible (although in the reconstruction parts of the structures disappear), the distinction between the earlier two phases is not clear-cut. For example, it is difficult to follow the extent of the floor layer (of pounded reddish clay) that supposedly seals the ash (phase 1, within the same stratum C) and which Barreca equates with a new building phase. Also, if the floor layer [14] belonging to an alledged phase 2 covers the remains of wall [5] (**FIGURE 77**) (and is therefore later as Barreca stresses (1969: 31 n. 1)) it is difficult to see how the corner of this wall is reconstructed in elevation and made contemporary to the same floor (see Barreca 1969: fig. 4).[15] Moreover, it is not clear why the doric capitals or the Egyptianising cornices could not belong to Barreca's phase 1 (rather than to phase 2).

The points mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs allow us to conclude that there is *not* sufficient archaeological evidence to account for the reconstructions of the Punic remains at Antas as proposed by Ferruccio Barreca. Taking the site of Antas in isolation, a modest case for religious ritual taking place here can be made on the basis of the number of votive and dedicatory inscriptions recovered. But we lack the contextual information necessary to identify the complex of buildings beneath the Roman temple with a Punic religious site. The data is not conclusive in themselves if a highly sceptical position is adopted.

The importance of Antas lies not so much in the definition of the architectural remains; none of the artefacts discovered can be related to any architectural unit or space. The site is important for a discussion of Punic penetration in the Sardinian interior; the nature of the relatively large number of votive offerings adds to this

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[13] I have been unable to trace any further references to these excavations.

[14] Barreca often uses the term 'terra' earth to denote a layer but does not define the characteristics of the deposit (example, 1969: 2, 25, 27).

[15] Unfortunately floor [14] (**FIGURE 77**) was not excavated so we do not know what was underneath. If, indeed, another floor was found there it would corroborate the existence of two superimposed floor levels, and hence of two phases.

importance. It is only in these broad terms that we can define Punic activity at Antas in the last five centuries of the first millennium BC.

3.8.2 Temple of Bes (*Tempio di Bes*), Bithia

Site visit: Not possible; site was covered by sand

Reported: Taramelli 1931-1932

Pubished: Pesce 1968

Description. It was the discovery of a number of tombs uncovered by the sea during a storm sometime in the late 1920s that sparked off archaeological excavations in the area known as Chia in the comune of Domus de Maria (province of Cagliari). Antonio Taramelli who reported the discovery (Taramelli 1931-32), then in charge of Antiquities on the island, carried out excavations between May and July of 1933 and again in November of the same year. At the foot of the promontory where the sixteenth century AD coastal tower (Torre di Chia) was built, to the N and not far away from the sea (**FIGURE 80**),[1] Taramelli uncovered the remains of what he described as a 'Sanctuary, composed of a boundary wall or *temenos*, which encloses a sacred aedicule [...]' (1933-1934: 290).[2] Taramelli compared the aedicule to the one postulated for Nora by G. Patroni (**3.8.7**), because like that one, the sandstone stonework was plastered over by fine layers of white and red stucco. Taramelli says that the same decorative treatment was carried out on the 'numerous altars lying infront of the aedicule'. As for the layout (**FIGURE 81**), Taramelli points out that the boundary wall included two 'spaces' (*ambienti*) on the seaward side [10], 'perhaps storage rooms (*magazzeni*) or perhaps empty spaces (*cassoni*) meant to serve as wave-breakers. On the eastern side [8], [9], the entrance is flanked by a small room on either

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[1] For a discussion of the exact location of the building in relation to other archaeological remains at Bithia see Barreca (1965: 142-144, fig. 11); also Bartoloni (1996) on the port of Bithia. Grottanelli (1981b: 116) considers its position as 'suburban'.

[2] The complete text describing the remains of the 'temple of Bes' is the following (Taramelli 1933-1934: 290-291): 'La scoperta di maggiore interesse fu quella di un Santuario, composto da un recinto o *temenos*, che racchiude un'edicoletta sacrale, di piccole dimensioni come quella di Nora, illustrata dal prof. Patroni, murata in blocchi di arenaria rivestita da molti strati di stucco bianco e rosso che copriva anche i numerosi altari prima fronteggianti l'edicola. Il recinto presenta sul lato verso il mare due ambienti, forse magazzeni o forse casoni destinati a rompere l'urto delle ondate e sul lato orientale l'andito di ingressso con due piccole camere ai lati, adibite probabilmente ad alloggio del sacerdote.

'Accanto all'edicola, con gli scarsi resti della semplice decorazione architettonica, si ebbe la stipe votiva con qualche terracotta figurata, vasi e monete dal periodo punico a quello repubblicano ed imperiale; presso il tempietto si ricuperò l'inscrizione, purtroppo mutila, in marmo, di lingua e caratteri punici [...]

side, probably meant as priests' quarters.' Taramelli also reports that next to the aedicule, with its 'scanty architectural remains', he found a 'votive hoard' which included, 'terracotta figurines, vases and Punic and Roman (Republican and Imperial) coins'. Adjacent to the 'little temple' (*tempietto*) Taramelli also recovered fragments of a marble slab inscribed with Punic letters (Amadasi Guzzo 1990: 81-82). A large sandstone statue of the god Bes (**PLATE 17**) was also found, 'near the altar, besides its base' (Taramelli 1933-1934: 290).

Excavations within the 'temple of Bes' were renewed in 1953, and continued in the summers of 1954 and 1955, with the work of a Swedish mission led by Dr Kunwald. A report of the excavations has not yet been published. Pesce (1965: 314-5) assures us that Kunwald's team concentrated on a rigorous and scientific 'cleaning' of the building interior and that digging was carried out beneath its floors. Pesce himself carried out excavations outside the temple (Pesce 1968), producing a plan of the remains (Pesce 1961: figs 7, 11, 12; 1965: figs. 16-18) (**FIGURES 81, 82**) and giving the dimensions of the building (18 m. long, 12 m. wide; walls preserved up to a meter high; the orientation is not clear)[3] before everything was covered over to protect the remains from clandestine activities (Pesce 1965: 31-2). Outside the temple to the W, Pesce uncovered a number of tombs which he dated to Roman Imperial times. (Pesce 1966: 315-321). The tombs (**FIGURE 82; Table 3.9**) were lying over and dug into a layer of blackish sand [C] under which lay a number of terracotta artifacts comprising mainly limbs, feet and heads, together with fragments of statuettes. Under another layer of black sand lay another group of terracotta statuettes, this time whole and made up of bell-shaped figures [D]. Punic and Roman Republican coins were also found, [G1] and [G2], lying into two separate and distinct piles. Pesce interpreted the terracotta figurines and statuettes as a sacred deposit (*deposito sacro*), ex-votos belonging to a hoard (1968: 321, 331) which were placed in a pit (*fossa*) (measuring 6.70 m. wide and 20.74 m. long) dug into the sand when the adjacent temple was

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'Accanto all'altare si rinvenne anche, presso alla sua base, una grande imagine in pietra arenaria del dio Bes [...]'

[3] The orientation of the building is given differently by Pesce in two plans. In one (1965: fig. 16) the major axis is oriented SW-NE, while in another (1965: fig. 17) it is apparent that the major axis is oriented W-E. Since the building is no longer visible it is not possible to check which is the right one. Compare **FIGURES 81**and **82** which make up **FIGURE 83**.

cleared (Pesce 1965: 35).[4] The hoard included also a terracotta fragment of a boat, pottery lamps, pottery incense burners, pottery vessels, small bronze amulet cases, shells with suspension holes, glass beads, a bone amulet, small bone combs, and other metal artifacts (Pesce 1968: 331-337). The statuettes were found lying vertically and horizontally in blackish sand which in turn covered a number of small funnel-shaped pits dug into the sand and containing urns, charcoal and burnt bones (Pesce 1965: 36; 1968: 323-328). Pesce reports that the Swedish archaeologists had found similar pits about 0.30 m. beneath the floor of the temple but it is not known what was inside them (1965: 34). Pesce refers to the pits as an 'incineration necropolis' refuting the possibility that the area was a tophet given the lack of stelae, which are characteristic of these ritual precincts elsewhere in Sardinia (1965: 34, 1968: 323, n. 1).

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">OUTSIDE 'TEMPLE'
(Pesce excavations)</th><th>INSIDE 'TEMPLE'
(Taramelli* & Kunwald excav.)</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">B whitish sand; no artefacts (strato cappellaccio)</td><td rowspan="2">statue*, inscription*,
votive hoard*, altars</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">Roman necropolis
various types of tombs
(inhumation)</td><td>C blackish, greyish sand</td></tr>
<tr><td>small figurines</td><td rowspan="2">floor (calpestio)</td></tr>
<tr><td>blackish sand</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">D terracotta statuettes,
figurines, pottery
G1 Punic coin hoard
G2 Roman coin hoard
sandy</td><td rowspan="3">↕ 0.30 m.</td></tr>
<tr><td>blackish sand</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">E funnel-shaped pits: necropolis (incineration)</td></tr>
</table>

Table 3.9 Schematic reconstruction of the stratigraphy inside and outside the temple.

Discussion. Taramelli's account remains the main source of information that is available about the building. Any diaries or other personal notes that would have been compiled at the time of the excavations have not been traced and attempts by

[4] Pesce postulates that this clearance must have taken place when the restoration of the temple

Gennaro Pesce to recover any documentation from Taramelli's relatives have been unsuccessful (Pesce 1965: 31; 1968: 314, n. 3). The report is illustrated by four photographs but only the first (1933-1934: 288) shows a general view of the building taken from beyond the threshold and looking down towards the interior. On its own the view is very difficult to correlate with the written account given the low viewpoint of the camera, but when set alongside Pesce's plan a few details can be picked out. For example, the position of what Taramelli refers to as a 'plinth for the statue of Bes' in the caption to the second photo (1933-1934: 289), can be made out on the plan. The 'plinth' can be seen in the middleground of the first photo to the left, but there it lacks the crowning slab (visible in the second photo) which must have been placed on top of the plinth by the excavator or his workers (**FIGURE 81**: [5] or [7]). Unfortunately there is no sign of the statue in the first photo; indeed, it is difficult to pin down exactly the findspot.[5] Taramelli says that it was found 'near the altar', 'besides its base'. Whereas in the caption to the second photo he speaks of 'altars' and of 'the plinth' in the same sentence, here he refers to a particular altar ('*the* altar'; my emphasis). The 'plinth' and 'the altar' cannot be the same structure and it is therefore possibile that Taramelli was referring to the rectangular platform [6] infront of the 'aedicule' [1] when he spoke of 'the altar'. It is possible that the statue was placed on the base shown in the second photo (the sizes would correspond) but it is not possible to know whether the base would take the weight. In fact the statue was clearly not photographed on this 'plinth' in the third and fourth photographs but it seems to have been placed on the platform of the 'aedicule' [1].

Determining the findspot of the inscription is fraught with the same difficulties. Taramelli says that the inscribed marble slab was found 'near the little temple' (*presso il tempietto*). It is difficult to understand what the author meant by 'little temple'. If by the phrase he meant the whole edifice then the findspot of the inscription would be somewhere outside; but the terms used by Taramelli seem to point in a different direction. In his article he speaks of 'a boundary wall which encloses one of the temples of the city' (*un recinto racchiudente uno dei tempi* [sic]

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mentioned in the inscription was undertaken (Pesce 1965: 35).

[5] P. Agus (1983: 41) states that the statue was found in the vicinity of the 'main altar' but does not point out where this is.

della città) (1933-1934: 288); then of 'a Sanctuary, composed of a boundary wall or *temenos*, which encloses a small sacred aedicule' (*un Santuario, composto da un recinto o* temenos, *che racchiude un'edicoletta sacrale*). The boundary wall encloses a 'temple' in one phrase and a 'sacred aedicule' in another, so it is possible that Taramelli is equating the temple with the sacred aedicule. Indeed, he uses the diminutive (little or small) for both the temple (*tempietto*) and the aedicule (*edicoletta*). If this is so then it is possible to conclude that the inscription was found inside the building and probably within its inner half.

The religious nature of the remains uncovered at Bithia has been accepted by many scholars (e.g. Barreca 1970: 30; 1986: 129; Fantar 1986: 58; Pesce 1961: 66; 108-111; Toreb 1992: 73; Ribichini & Xella 1994: 108) and most present a plausible case for religious ritual taking place at Bithia. Notwithstanding, however, it is felt that the religious nature of the building should be established in a more conclusive way.

The remarkable datum from the site is the find of so many figurines, statuettes and fragments. Even more impressive, perhaps, is the discovery of a large sandstone statue which, in the context of what we know of other sites in the Phoenician and Punic world, is certainly unusual. Even contextual information is available for this corpus of data. Although most of the artifacts came from outside the building, from what seems to be a homogenous unit, their association with the building itself and its contents can be made. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that the building served as a repository for these unusual artefacts. Indeed, Pesce points out that figurines similar to what he uncovered outside the edifice were discovered by Taramelli inside it (Pesce 1965: 36; 1968: 321, fig. 15, 332). The building also served as a repository for an impressive statue and of an inscription on marble which specifically commemorates the building of structures (altars: *mzbhm*) clearly associated with religious ritual. Of course, it is possible to suggest that the building was nothing but a storage area for a rich collection of mobiliary art, pottery of conspicuously uncommon form, and an inscription. But this is highly unlikely, and a good case for religious ritual taking place at this site can certainly be made without reference to other sites elsewhere. The force of this argument springs from the repetition of various elements, in particular the

statuettes. What needs to be established is that the objects were used in the course of expressive action associated with a divinity. In fact, as I will argue below, there is ample material at this site in Bithia which is clearly of symbolic significance.

If we take the great limestone statue first: its exceptional size (1.53 m in height) and weight suggest that it is context-specific; in other words, it was undoubtedly meant for this building (**FIGURE 84, PLATE 17**). Secondly, since only one such statue was found on site it is plausible to suggest that this was the image of someone important. On the basis of these points the statue may well qualify as a cult image. Unfortunately, we do not know its original collocation within the building: a central imposing location, perhaps on the platform at the west end, would have made a stronger case. Its posture, however, suggests that it was meant to be viewed frontally, while the gesture of the arms display power: the figure is clasping a snake coiling round the left arm from its head, and the right arm is raised. The iconography is well understood from other contexts. The statue represents the Egyptian god Bes: a bearded crowned dwarf, flat faced with tongue exposed, and short legs (Agus 1985: 43). We therefore have the image of a divinity.

Secondly, there are the terracotta statuettes and the figurines, which have been the subject of typological studies by Pesce (1965) and Uberti (1973). 441 figurines representing different parts of the human body were recovered together with 59 statuettes. The statuettes are representations of the human figure with their arms and hands pointing and resting on different parts of the body (**PLATE 18**): the cephalic area (head), the cervical area (neck), the upper torso (chest and shoulders), the middle torso (sides), the lower torso (stomach, genitals, hips) (Galeazzi 1986; **FIGURE 85**). The body is composed of a wheel-thrown clay cylinder, either with an open or a closed base, and onto which the anatomical details (the head, genitals, breasts, navel, and the arms) were applied at a secondary stage in the production. The statuettes do not reach a height in excess of 0.30 m. What is immediately striking about the statuettes is the variation in the posture of the arms and limbs. Building on earlier work (Pesce 1965: 66-69) a historian of medicine (Galeazzi 1986) has noted that these postures are suggestive of gestures that sick patients employ to convey to a medical practitioner

their health problem.[6] Galeazzi has argued convincingly that the hands are pointing to the suffering or diseased areas of the human body. Whichever the case, it is possible to infer that the purpose of the gestures was a way of communicating with transcendant powers (Galeazzi 1986: 197), most probably the impressive cult statue of Bes itself. In this sense, the statuettes can be considered as either votaries (the image of the worshippers themselves in the act of asking for a deity's intervention) or as offerings to the deity (after the intervention had taken place), although the former would seem more likely. They all appear to have been manufactured specifically for this reason: their size suggests they were not meant to be carried around; Galeazzi points out that the high degree of variation in the facial expressions of the statuettes would imply a "personal" touch for each specimen (1986: 191).

A compelling case for religious ritual taking place at this site in Bithia has now been made without having to look to other sites to reinforce our argument. However, our proposition is greatly strengthened once the inscription is taken into consideration. Here we have a fragmented marble slab (measuring 0.205 by 0.175 m and 0.06 m thick) inscribed with a Neo-Punic script which commemorates 'the altars' (*mzbhm*) which were 'made' (presumably built) by 'the people of Bithia' at their expense (Amadasi Guzzo 1990: 81-82).

We are on somewhat more difficult ground as regards the chronology. Pesce (1968: 325) commented upon the difficulties of dating the remains on the basis of the plan alone. A *terminus post quem* for the erection of the building is, however, provided by the cinerary urns in the pits underneath the temple which point to a date around the seventh-sixth centuries BC. The oldest coins found in the hoard can be dated to a period which is not anterior to about 300 BC; the whole assemblage spans the last three centuries BC. If we accept Pesce's compelling suggestion (1965: 36) that the votive hoard was dumped outside the temple in one instance, then it seems that the complex had its heyday during the last three centuries BC. We have no material to document earlier phases and therefore it is not possible to know what

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[6] Pesce had noted (1965: 69, n. 1) that his interpretation was corroborated by the Director of a clinic in Cagliari, Prof. Aresu.

happened between the sixth and fourth century BC, despite the fact that Barreca (1986: 137) dates the statue of Bes to a period spanning the sixth-fourth centuries BC on stylistic grounds (*contra* Agus 1983: 47). Furthermore, the inscription in Neo-Punic characters, dated to the second-third century AD, suggests that the temple was in use and restorations being undertaken well into Roman Imperial times, despite the fact that we lack any rich assemblages to account for its frequentation.

3.8.3 Capo Sant'Elia, Cagliari

Site visit: 17 or 23 September 1995

Reported: Spano 1870, 1904

Published: unexcavated

Description and discussion. On the extremity of Capo Sant'Elia, near the modern city of Cagliari, a limestone slab inscribed with some Punic characters was recovered by Filippo Nissardi in 1870 from the vicinity of an old tower.[1] The inscription, dated on paleographic grounds to the 3rd century BC, mentions a dedication of an altar to Astarte of Eryx (Erice) - *'strt 'rk* (Amadasi Guzzo 1990: 75, 1981: 43 for response to reservations by Garbini 1981). Giovanni Spano (1870: 12-27) who published the inscription hypothesized that a Punic temple dedicated to the goddess Astarte must have existed on the Cape, exactly on the site occupied by the old monastery of Saint Eliah, overlooking the Gulf of Cagliari. According to Spano, access to the temple was from a rock-cut stepped road known as 'the entrance to hell' (*Bocca dell'inferno*). Spano also mentions a cistern not very far away from the tower.

Spano's publication of the inscription and his hypothesis regarding the existence of a temple at Capo Sant'Elia were accepted by many scholars. Taramelli who conducted surveys and excavations on the cape (1904: 23, 31) had no reservations in placing the 'chapel' (*sacello*) or 'sanctuary' (*Santuario*) dedicated to the Venus of Eryx (*Venere Erycina*) below the foundations of the monastery, even though he makes no mention of Spano's work. Other authors support the theory of the temple and classify it as an extra-urban sanctuary linked to the nearby city of Karales (Barreca 1986: 289; Grottanelli 1981: 118-9; Moscati 1977: 168; Tore 1989: 35), while Ugas & Zucca (1984: 178) considered it to form part of a coastal 'emporion'.[2] But the only remains that can be seen on site include two rock-cut cisterns (not just one) mentioned by Tore (1989: 61 n. 50), one bottle-shaped and the

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[1] The name of the tower is given as *Torre del Poetto* in Nissardi's map reproduced in Taramelli (1904: 22 fig. 2), while Amadasi Guzzo (1990: 75) refers to it by the name of *Torre di Calamosca*. The map in Taramelli includes the locations of excavations carried out in July 1903 (rilievo F. Nissardi).

[2] For reservations on this see Tore 1989: 61-62 n. 50.

other elliptical (*cf.* also Zucca 1989: 775), besides pottery sherds of Roman date and a Punic bronze coin discovered in the area some time ago (reported in Tore: 1989: 61 note 50). Barreca (1986: 289) adds 'small walls' (*muretti*) which 'do no longer exist' (*ora scomparsi*), and rock-cut canals leading to the cisterns. One feature which is not mentioned is the existence of shallow surface quarrying right at the edge of the cape.

Taking the remains visible at the site today and the history of explorations a case for religious ritual rests only with the dedicatory inscription found in a secondary context. None of the criteria outlined in CHAPTER II can be fulfilled and at this stage it is impossible to accept the remains as evidence for a religious building.

3.8.4 Temple at Via Malta, Cagliari

Site visit: Not possible; site was built over following the excavations

Reported: —

Published: Mingazzini 1949, 1952a, 1952b

Description. During construction works carried out at Piazza del Carmine and Via Malta, Cagliari (**FIGURE 86a**), in July 1938, ashlar blocks were uncovered which led to archaeological excavations being undertaken by Doro Levi from the University of Cagliari. Digging was interrupted in October 1938 when anti-semitic persecutions in Sardinia brought an abrupt end to Levi's activities in Italy. Excavations were renewed under the direction of Levi's successor at the University, Paolino Mingazzini, between 13 March - 27 June and 6 November - 25 November of 1939. Further work was conducted in the summers of 1940 and 1941 by Raffaele Delogu attached to the *Soprintendenza*. A report of the excavations was published by Mingazzini in 1949, followed by some additions a few years later (Mingazzini 1952a, 1952b).

Mingazzini identified the remains he uncovered at Piazza del Carmine with a Punic sanctuary (1949: 213-224, plan on p. 213) (**FIGURE 87**). These included a rectangular platform [A] built of ashlar blocks of soft limestone (*tramezzaro*) laid without mortar. The platform measured 15.75 by 10.75 m. and was oriented NNE-SSW (1949: fig. 1). Opposite the platform to the SSW was a rectilinear staircase [B] built in the same technique (1949: fig. 3). This led down onto a ring-shaped platform [C] below the stairs, at the edge of which started the descent of a semicircular theatre-like staircase (*cavea*) [G] built of very hard limestone. Eleven steps were identified measuring 0.40 m. high and 0.70 m. wide (1949: 224-225). To the NW of the first platform, the excavations uncovered a large area bounded by two walls at right angles [D], and to the SW with a curvilinear wall [E] which abutts on platform [B] (1949: fig. 3). On wall [D] were two column bases [d], [d'] (1949: fig. 7); a 14 m.-deep rock-cut well served by an underground spring was also uncovered within this open space (1949: figs 4, 5). Mingazzini interpreted the rectangular platform as a base for a

temple of which, he remarked, practically nothing had survived (1949: 215). While admitting that a reconstruction of the layout would be difficult and hypothetical, he drew analogies with a funerary monument (*tempietto*) at Agrigento in Sicily suggesting a *pronaos* with four columns for the Cagliari temple giving also its dimensions: 14.43 by 8.61 m. (1949: 217). Earlier reservations were subsequently abolished when a reconstruction was in fact published (Mingazzini 1952b: plate 1.1). Mingazzini held that the open space adjacent to the temple would have been a sacred garden (1949: 219-220) served by the water from the well. When the sanctuary fell into disuse, pottery especially amphorae and fragments of terracotta figurines, were thrown inside the well, filling it completely (1949: 239-269).

Mingazzini was of the opinion that the remains he uncovered at Via Malta belonged to a purely Punic sanctuary dating to the late fourth or early third century BC. By refering to the works of Gsell (1920: 392-394), Conteneau (1949: 128), and Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 315) he insisted that the garden, the well, the enclosure wall, and the isolated small temple, are all essential elements of a typically Phoenician sanctuary (Mingazzini 1949: 223-224). Mingazzini sought further corroboration for his proposal by maintaining that there was a similarity between four cornice fragments found near wall [D] and certain decorative motifs present on the stele from the tophet at Sulcis (Sant' Antioco) (1949: 222-223, figs 8-10). He noted that on the tophet stele the Egyptianising cavetto cornice includes a series of serpents or *uraei* in relief; for the cornice fragments from Via Malta, Mingazzini hypothesised that the *uraei* would have been painted on a surface of the same shape, in a very "non-Greek" (*anellenico*) fashion. He also noted that the cornice from this site would have been placed on a building much akin to the monument (actually a mausoleum) with Egyptianising cornice at Dougga in Tunisia reproduced in Perrot & Chipiez (1885: 376, fig. 262-264). Mingazzini maintained that the discovery of the Punic temple at Via Malta was important since it provided archaeological proof to the literary sources which refer to Phoenician religious sites.

In a subsequent publication, Mingazzini (1952b) insisted that the orientation of the platform with the corners would support his belief that the complex was of

Phoenician origin. In making this claim he altered his earlier prouncement (1949: 217) that the orientation was not dictated by religious reasons but simply by the local terrain, which at this point descends rapidly towards the seafront.

Discussion. References in the literature to the alleged Punic temple at Via Malta vary. Moscati (1968: 267; 1986: 190-191) often inlcuded the site in his description of Punic temples in Sardinia. In his publications, Pesce (1961: 63-65, figs 8, 9; 1966a: 148) makes constant reference to Via Malta accepting all of Mingazzini's conclusions and reconstructions. Indeed, reading Pesce gives the (wrong) impression that the whole monument, with its temple and garden of trees, had been uncovered. The first to bring into question Mingazzini's conclusions was J. A. Hanson in his work on Roman theatre-temples (1959: 32-33). Hanson held that the excavations did not provide sufficient evidence to establish the likelihood of Mingazzini's proposal that the remains belonged to a purely Phoenician sanctuary, and prefers to put the word Punic in quotes (1959: fig. 6). Hanson noted that the structural layout of what was uncovered at Via Malta (**FIGURE 88**) had the strongest parallels with the Roman or "Italic" theatre-temples at Tivoli and Gabii (as Mingazzini himself had infact noted (1952b)), but nothing that looked vaguely Punic. The finds lifted from the well, he argued, provided a *terminus post quem* of about 300 BC and a *terminus ante quem* of about 50 BC: the activity of the Romans in Sardinia following their conquest in 238 BC would favour a date late in the third century BC or early second century BC for the remains.

Hanson's proposals have been accepted by Angiolillo (1985) who suggests that the theatre-temple at Cagliari would have been active towards the beginning of the second century BC (also Ribichini & Xella 1994: 104). The lower chronology is mentioned in passing by Tore (1989b: 35) who still prefers, however, to mention the temple at Via Malta in a dictionary entry about Phoenician and Punic Cagliari (1992c: 86; see **Table 1.1**).

Only some points need be added to show that Mingazzini's arguments are not convincing. First, the garden adjacent to the alleged temple was simply assumed by the excavator; its existence was not demonstrated. Second, even a cursory glance at the catalgoue of material lifted from the well and elsewhere on site shows that the material is not Punic, with the exception of a few graffiti on the base of pots. Third, the cornice blocks retrieved by Mingazzini show no resemblance whatsoever to the Egyptianising cornice block he cites from Dougga. Indeed, there is no resemblance to any other Egyptianising blocks from known Phoenician and Punic sites which have a totally different cross-section (an arc or cavetto rather than an S-shape); positing a painted row of *uraei* is purely conjectural and Mingazzini is simply begging the question to establish the likelihood of his theory.

On the basis of what has been discussed thus far, we are not in a position to see a Phoenician or Punic structure here.

3.8.5 Matzanni

Site visit: —

Reported: Lovisato 1900; Taramelli 1918; Barreca 1970, 1975

Published: Site is unexcavated

Description and discussion. In 1969 Ferruccio Barreca announced the relocation of remains of a Punic temple, in the mountains behind Villacidro in the vicinity of Matzanni, at Punta Cuccurdoni Mannu, on a point 800 m. above sea level (Barreca 1970: 28-29, plate 2; 1975: 124-125) (**FIGURE 75**).[1] The remains had been identified by Prof. D. Lovisato earlier this century who speaks of a temple of rectangular plan (Lovisato 1900). Antonio Taramelli tried to trace the site in 1916 but was unsuccessful despite the fact that the location suggested to him the 'high places' (*alti luoghi*) of the Canaanite Levant (Taramelli 1918: coll. 23-26, n. 3). Barreca suggested that the remains seem to have belonged to two temples and not one, but that only parts of two walls perpendicular to one another could be seen. The site was studied by F. Sedda who counted fifteen blocks belonging to an Egyptianising cavetto cornice, three of which were corner stones. A plan was made of the unexcavated remains to include the two walls preserved for a length of 3.70 m. and 6.85 m. respectively (in Zucca 1984a: 118-119) (**FIGURE 98d**). According to Zucca the Egyptianising gorge blocks would be dated to the third century BC; the pottery sherds strewn around the site would suggest a date in the second century BC, but a bronze coin of Antoninus Pius suggests a frequentation of the site in Roman Imperial times.

Various authors agree that the remains belong to a Punic extra-urban temple, and Barreca observed that the placing of the edifice commanded spectacular views of southern Sardinia, from Capo Carbonara to the Isola di San Pietro (Barreca 1970: 28; Tore 1989b: 47). T. Agus suggests that the temple, like that at Antas, was connected with metal mining activity in the Iglesiente (1989: 140). However, none of the

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[1] Zucca (1984a: 118) gives a detailed description of the location, placing it however at Genna Cantoni and not Matzanni. Tore (1989b: 70 n. 128) notes that the ruins lie at a height of 723 m. above sea level. Attempts by the present author to locate the site in 18 April 1997 were unsuccessful due to bad weather conditions on Monte Linas, resulting in a car accident.

scholars spell out clearly *why* they classified Matzanni as a Punic religious site. A position like Matzanni could well be a watch-out station commanding the pass into the Iglesiente from the Sulcis via Monte Sirai. It is suspected that the religious status was established on the basis of the presence of the cavetto cornice blocks and because, according to Zucca the building had its sides oriented to the cardinal points, as was the norm with Punic temples.

On the basis of what is known about the unexcavated site it is difficult to see a religious building at Matzanni.

3.8.6 Temple of the Mastio (*Tempio del Mastio*), Monte Sirai

Site visit: 12 April 1995, September 1995, 17 April 1997

Reported: *MS I-IV*

Published: —

Description and discussion. Beyond the entrance to the acropolis at Monte Sirai (**FIGURES 75, 79**), on the right and at a height of 187 m. above sea level, excavations led by Ferruccio Barreca between 1964 and 1966, uncovered the remains of a relatively large building which became known in the preliminary reports as the 'Mastio' or keep (*MS II*: 29) (**FIGURE 90**). Overall, the building measures 18.20 m. on its NE side and 17.50 m. on its SE-NW side, and the remains do not exceed two metres in height. The stone used for construction includes a reddish trachyte stone which outcrops in the area, compact limestone and soft whitish tuff. In plan, the building consists of two central areas [6] and [9] adjacent to each other (6.50 by 3.40 m.) and divided by a low wall, and flanked to the SW by a cistern [3] and to the NE by a rectangular structure which the excavator interpreted as a tower [13]. At their W end, each of the two central spaces is divided into two smaller spaces or rooms [7] and [8], [10] and [11], measuring about 2.45 by 1.65 m. Access to the central spaces is through a flight of two steps which lead to doorways.

By the end of the second season of excavations at Monte Sirai (1964; the first in the Mastio: *MS II*: 29-78), Barreca concluded (*MS II*: 30) that the remains belonged to various building phases spanning at least five centuries. During this time the function of the building changed from a military outpost or keep (phases 1 and 2) to a temple (phase 3) (**FIGURE 91**). The edifice was again used for military purposes (phase 4) before it was destroyed in the first century BC (*MS II*: 30). Excavation outside and within the keep was very limited during the 1964 campaign and included a stratigraphic sondage (*saggio stratigraphico*) in the chapel and another along the NW wall of the *torre cava* (*MS II*: 45-47), and a 'clearance excavation' (*saggio di profondità*) in room 11 (*cf. MS III*: 36-7). Despite the very limited digging, Barreca noted that only few structural remains belonging to phase 1 had survived, and that the

tower had been added to the main building (*MS II*:36) in phase 2. He even concluded that phase 3 was responsible for a complete structural transformation of the keep. During this time, the casemates (*casematte*) of the NW wall of the keep (7, 8, 10, 11) were emptied and the curvilinear SE wall was dismantled, while the central area was transformed into a temple of tripartite plan (*MS II*: 49, 52).[1] This included a vestibule (*vestibolo*) [1], a middle hall (*sala mediana*) [6], and a shrine (*penetrale*) [8] with secondary side chambers (*ambienti secondari laterali*) [9], [10], [11]. The entrance was on the SE side of the complex via two low steps, which separated the vestibule from the hall. According to Barreca, this tripartite scheme followed the architectural canons of the Canaanites (*MS II*: 39). Within the area he denoted as the vestibule Barreca even identified two quadrangular pillar bases with the pillars which were often placed in pairs in front of the *cella* in Canaanite or Syro-Palestinian temples (*MS II*: 39, 70).

From the room [8] Barreca reported the discovery of a number of finds which led him to label the room a chapel (*sacello*) (*MS II*: 53). These included a limestone statuette (**PLATE 19**) found against, and in the middle of the back wall opposite the entrance, plates and votive lamps placed above a semicircular platform built of stones and mud, and a small block of stone placed infront of the statue. Barreca interpreted the block as 'a small altar for bloodless offerings'. From the adjacent room [7], the excavator reported only the retrieval of a small inscribed bronze plaque lying on the 'floor'. The lack of 'more important finds' such as *ex-votos* meant that the room could not be termed another *penetrale* (*MS II*: 41).[2]

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[1] Barreca fits this even in a historical framework: 'Come si è già detto a proposito della cronologia relativa, questa casamatta e le altre del lato nord-occidentale debbono esser state svuotate e adattate per il culto quando il mastio cessò di funzionare come tale, cioè nella terza fase edilizia dell'edificio, che non può corrispondere ad altro che ad un tempo in cui era cessata l'egemonia di Cartagine sulla Sardegna: un tempo successive al 241 a.C.' (*MS II*: 49).

[2] 'Delle altre casematte, quella adiacente [...] al penetrale da sud-ovest, benché accuratamante esplorata, non ha fornito alcun indizio che autorizzi a ritenerla un secondo penetrale, destinato al culto di qualche divinità che facesse coppia con quella venerata nel primo. Tranne una breve epigrafe su lamina bronzea, rinvenuta *presso il piano di pavimento*, nessun oggetto importante vi è stato trovato, cosicché è probabile che essa non fosse neppure destinata a deposito di *ex voto* e simili, ma dovesse semplicemente assolvere funzioni susidiarie per il culto, che doveva inveece gravitare atorno all'ambiente attiguo.' (*MS II*: 41; emphasis added)

Excavation outside and within the keep was very limited during the 1964 campaign and included a *saggio stratigraphico* in the chapel and another along the NW wall of the *torre cava* (*MS II*: 45-47), and a *saggio di profondità* in room 11 (*cf. MS III*: 36-7). Within the chapel Barreca could distinguish two strata, A and B, on the basis of the colour of the deposits (*MS II*: 47-50). Amongst other finds, stratum A contained a stone pillar or baetyl (0.49 m. high) set into a rectangular base, and a bronze figurine depicting a seated person about to pour water into a bowl (*MS II*: 53). Stratum B contained the finds mentioned earlier including the cult statue, a male terracotta protome (**PLATE 16b**), pottery incense burners, pottery lamps, a flat stone (interpreted as the halo of the cult statuette) and other pottery vessels. The finds were lying over a layer of beaten earth or sand (**Table 3.12**). Substantial pieces of red plaster were also found at this level near the walls (*MS II*: 47). Further digging revealed the existence of a floor level of a bright brown colour (*MS III*: 20).

When further excavations were carried out within the building in 1965, Barreca confirmed that the stratigraphy noted in the chapel or shrine existed in the other casemate rooms [7], [10], [11] (*MS III*: 17-18). From room 10, he reported the discovery in stratum A of a sort of circular platform set against the N corner of the casemate. The platform which had a radius of 1.07 m. and was 0.35 m. high was constructed out of small stones bound together with mud. Inside a cavity which existed within the structure, a small burnt vase was found. Barreca interpreted the structure as an altar similar to one uncovered in the tophet nearby; the burnt vase would have been a 'foundation offering' or 'sacrifice' (*MS III*: 18-19). The altar clearly belonged to stratum A and rested above a yellow layer (*strato di crollo*) which was elsewhere identified as stratum B. Pottery dating to the third-second centuries BC was unearthed from within the latter. At the time of excavation the decision was taken not to remove the altar to see whether an earlier one existed beneath it belonged to stratum B. The altar is not included in any of the published drawings of this building and no longer exists *in situ* (**FIGURE 90**).

Below stratum B, a compact layer of stones (stratum C) was interpreted as a levelling fill for stratum A. From below the level corresponding to the top of stratum

C the walls of rooms 7, 10 and 11, are not dressed but have rough surfaces implying, according to Barreca, that they were not meant to be visible. Stratum C sealed layers containing red-slipped 'Phoenician-Punic' pottery dating to the 7th-6th centuries BC.

NW WALL (exterior)	CHAPEL [8]	MIDDLE HALL [6]	VESTIBULE [1]
humus	*humus*	*Humus*	*humus*
A[I] 0.07; pounded earth	**A** 0.13; black fill	**A** ?; ?	
A[II] 0.17; pounded earth on layer of small stones	**B** 0.60; yellow, clayish	**B** ?; ?	
B 0.10; yellow, clayish	*floor* pounded brown earth	*floor*; 0.03 2 layers of lime plaster	white tuff steps
C 0.35; Pu	**C** 0.25/0.50; tuff frags	**C** 0.07; small tuff stones, patches of ash	
D 0.04-0.12; Ph	**D** 1.10 (with E); comp. trachyte & limestone	**D** 0.10; pounded earth, ash; N, Ph	
E ?; N, Ph	**E** same as D; Ph	**E** 0.20; light brown earth; Ph	trachyte wall
F 0.073-0.183; N, Ph	**F** 0.20; wall	*massicciata*	
bedrock	**G** ? pounded sand; N, Ph	**F** 0.25; loose earth; N	*massicciata* & nuragic foundations
	bedrock	*Bedrock*	*bedrock*

D 0.10; pounded earth, ash; N, Ph

D = stratum **D**  Temple phase of building

0.10 = depth of stratum in metres

pounded earth, ash = description of main charactersitics of deposit

N, Ph, Pu, R = pottery: Nuragic, Phoenician, Punic, Roman

Table 3.10 Schematic reconstruction of a NW-SE section at Monte Sirai.

SW WALL (exterior)	CISTERN (space 3)	MIDDLE HALLS (spaces 6, 9)	ACCESS RAMP (space 12)	TOWER (space 13)
Humus	*humus*	*humus*	*humus*	*humus*
No layers described (excavation not stratigraphic)	unexcavated between 1964-66 — discovered in May 1981. (Barreca 1984: 149)	**A** ?; ?	ramp dug into a layer of stones and clay; mixed pottery — unexcavated	**A** 0.10; black deposit; R-N mixed
		B ?; ?		**B** 0.40; yellow & brown deposit; mixed pottery
		floor 0.03; 2 layers of lime plaster		cobbled surface
		C 0.07; small tuff stones, patches of ash		**C** 0.60; ?; Pu
		D 0.10;compacted earth, ash; N, Ph		cobbled surface
		E 0.20; light brown earth; Ph		**D** 0.40-0.80; ?; N, Ph; walls in **D**
		massicciata		**E** 0.10; compacted deposit; N, Ph
		F 0.25; loose earth; N		*massicciata* 0.15
		bedrock		**F** 0.06; ?; N
				bedrock

Key: same as Table 3.10

Table 3.11 Schematic reconstruction of a SW-NE section at Monte Sirai.

When further excavations were carried out in 1965 to throw light on the relative and absolute chronology of the building phases (*MS III*: 9-10), Barreca confirmed most of the conclusions he had reached in the previous year and identified the existence of an earlier Nuragic phase lying directly over bedrock and underneath the remains of the keep. The excavations carried out were of two types: *saggi* and *sondaggi esplorativi*. In the first, digging was undertaken to unravel the stratigraphy while in the second, excavation was undertaken to 'reveal hidden building structures'.[3] Stratigraphic excavation was undertaken in the remaining casemates [7], [8], [10], in the halls [6] and [9], in the area opposite the steps in the vestibule [1], and in the tower. Clearance was carried out along the SW and NW walls, in the space between the tower and room [9], and in the E corner of the building. In 1966 excavation was only limited to a stratigraphic excavation in an area infront the NW wall (*MS IV*: 8-25). Barreca's preliminary reports for 1964 and 1965 do not include any section drawings, with one exception (*MS IV*: fig. 1), and the description of the stratigraphy is given in writing as a list of strata; correlating the written account with the illustrations is very difficult, if at all possible. This problem is made worse by the fact that strata in different areas are given the same alphabetic label (A, B, C ...) even though these are not similar. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, one section has been schematically reconstructed from the preliminary reports in an attempt to highlight certain observations and conclusions (**FIGURE 92**). The deposits encountered in the stratigraphic sondages have been gathered in two tables (**Tables 3.10, 3.11**).

The schematic reconstruction of the stratigraphies makes it very clear that (Barreca's) strata A and B are separate from the rest (C and others) both inside the shrine [8] and in the middle halls [6], [9]. Here, floor levels which Barreca dated to the second half of the third century BC, are in fact built on, and seal, deposits which belong to earlier phases. Barreca went to great lengths to try and prove the military nature of the remains prior to strata A and B. In the 1964 preliminary report (*MS II*), he hypothesised that the keep must have been made up of an internal courtyard, [6]

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[3] 'I sondaggi esplorativi che hanno liberato strutture edilizie ancora nascoste [...]' (*MS III*: 12); 'Inoltre nella quarta casematta era stato praticato un sondaggio in profondità che, in un punto, aveva raggiunto il piano di roccia; ma si era trattato di un sondaggio esplorativo, tendente esclusivamente ad appurare l'altezza dell'interro.' (*MS III*: 17)

and [9] together, and surrounded by casemate walls (with foundations in strata D and E; *MS III*: 24). Entrance was not through large entranceways but through narrow posterns. The curvilinear nature of the SE wall abutting onto the main street leading to the entrance of the acropolis was characteristic of military architecture (*MS II*: 32, 51). To corroborate his hypotheses, Barreca looked towards the East for parallels (*MS II*: 63-65). In his second preliminary report (*MS III*), he noted that the curvilinear SE wall belonged in fact to the foundations of a *nuraghe* (circular prehistoric tower) which had existed on the site well before the arrival of the Phoenicians (*MS III*: 39-41, 45). According to him, however, this did not disprove his initial hypothesis but rather showed continuity in the military use of the site by both the prehistoric people and the early Phoenicians. Moreover, nothing was found in the deposits below the floor level at the bottom of stratum B to imply the existence of any religious activitiy at the site (*MS III*: 16, 45).

Despite the arguments brought forward, Barreca's hypotheses are not at all convincing. For a start, it is very difficult to conclude that the wall uncovered in stratum F within the sondage in space 8 belonged to a casemate wall. Moreover, it is clear that the layout of the architecture butting the NW wall (four small rooms adjacent to each other) belongs to stratum B at the earliest; and this is shown very clearly when comparing the plans in figs 4 and 5 in the reports (*MS III*). By calling these rooms casemates (*casematte*), Barreca is implying — and begging for — continuity between the architectural layout of stratum B and earlier ones, which is not the case (see *MS II*: 33). From these observations it is possible to conclude that the casemates were never 'emptied and transformed' to house cultic objects and altars, as Barreca claimed (*MS II*: 49).[4] Indeed, I would argue that these are not 'casemates' at all but spaces or rooms built purposely to house these 'cultic objects' during a different phase in the building's history.[5]

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[4] '[...] questa casamatta e le altre del lato nord-ocidentale debbono esser state svuotate e adattate per il culto quando il mastio cessò di funzionare come tale [...]' (*MS II*: 49)

[5] This is the recent opinion of Piero Bartoloni (1995: 105) but he gives no reason why this should be so.

With regards to the function of the complex from stratum B onwards, Barreca's interpretations are convincing. He identified cult activity on the basis of the finds unearthed in rooms 6-11, notably from room 8 which he labelled the chapel (*sacello* or *penetrale*) (see above). However, there are problems especially when trying to pin down the exact findspot of the artefacts. Whereas the archaeological context is clear for the finds unearthed in room 8 (see *MS II*: 52-56), the rest is more confusing: a reconstruction has been attempted from the description in the reports (**Table 3.12**). For example, we are not told explicity whether the inscription on a bronze plaque retreived from room 7 was found in stratum A or stratum B; we are simply told that it was found on the floor (*presso il piano di pavimento*) (*MS II*: 41). But elsewhere, Barreca notes that at the bottom of stratum B there was no floor (*pavimento*) except in room 8,[6] while in another instance he notes the existence of a 'trampling layer' (*piano di calpestio*) (*MS III*: 20). Despite the lack of coherence in defining the type of 'floor', it is safe to assume that the bronze inscribed plaque was found lying on the bottom surface of stratum B. Then there is a problem with a list of objects, mostly of bone, found in 'areas adjacent to the chapel' (*adiacenze del sacello*) (*MS II*: 56). Of particular interest are two worked bone plaques depicting a palmette and a grottesque face that ought to represent the dwarf god Bes. The caption to their photo says that they come *from* the chapel (*MS II*: plate 31) while the text says that they were found *outside* the chapel (*MS II*: 61). The latter seems to be the case because if they came from the chapel they would have been placed in an exhaustive list elsewhere (on pp. 53-56). We still have a problem, however, with identifying their exact find-spot: they could either come from room 6 or from room 9 but no reference is made to them when the rooms were fully excavated in 1965 (*MS III*: 12-13). The only reference to 'interesting bone objects' coming 'from the S corner of the fourth casemate room' (room 11) is made in the first report (*MS II*: 41) when Barreca highlights the results of the "clearance" of this space. It is not known whether these objects are the same as those coming from 'areas adjacent to the chapel' and we definitely do *not* know whether the finds belong to stratum A or stratum B; so the matter is inconclusive.

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[6] 'Gli ambienti dello strato B non avevano pavimento, ad eccezione della seconda casamatta (penetrale).' (*MS III*: 24). See also the p. 46 n. 1.

STRATA	CASEMATE ROOMS				MIDDLE HALLS		VESTI-BULE
humus	7	8	10	11	6	9	1
A	? ? ? ?	bronze fig. baetyl statuette protome incense burners lamps *MS II*: 53	altar *MS III*: 18	"cleared"			
B	? ? ? ? inscription on bronze plaque *MS II*: 41, 79	statuette lamps altar incense burners protome lamps *MS II*: 53-7	un-exc.	"cleared"			
	piano di calpestio	battuto durissimo	piano di calpestio	piano di calpestio	floor: breccia, potsherds and lime		
C	bronze figurine *MS III*: 20, 7						
D			bronze figurine *MS III*: 21,1				

Table 3.12 Finds dating to the temple and pre-temple phases.

Despite the problems outlined above, there is still sufficient evidence to meet the criteria provided in CHAPTER II that enables us to confirm the existence of a religious site in the acropolis at Monte Sirai. The inscription on the bronze plaque commemorates the dedication of something (probably an altar) 'to the Lord', and ends in the traditional votive formula typical of Punic inscriptions (*MS II*: 79-92, plates 34-

35; *ICO*: Sard. 39).[7] The context of retrieval of the statuette surrounded by miniature pottery lamps (*MS II*: plates18, 21), strongly suggests that the deposit in stratum B is of a primary nature. Gesture is not a helpful criterion to identify the statuette with a divine representation: the body is stiff, and the arms rendered in very low relief (*MS II*: plates 28-29); but its position inside the small space, against the back wall and in axis with the entrance, suggests that the figure was meant to focus the attention of viewers in the hall beyond. Also, no other representations on such a scale, of the same material, and of a comparable workmanship were found, so that the statuette had no rivals for attention. The argument that it represents a cult image can certainly be made, and the busts with incense-burning bowls on their head can be seen as subordinate to the cult image, probably forming an integral part of the cult equipment, just like a copper and a bronze bowl from the same context, if not offerings to the deity. On the other hand, nothing particularly distinctive can be seen in a small terracotta protome of a bearded man found in association with the statuette (*MS II*: plate 24). For stratum A, the suggestion that the parallelepiped of stone be considered a sacred stone or baetyl, is legitimate given the context. But for this stratum it is difficult to tell whether the finds constitute a primary deposit or not: for instance, while it is plausible to think that the entire depth of stratum A (0.60 m.) would have covered completely the statuette (0.42 m. high), leaving it *in situ*, it is difficult to understand how stratum B was formed. Its depth, a mere 0.13 m., would not have been sufficient to conceal the standing "baetyl" (0.49 m. high), nor if it was on its side (0.31 m.) (**Table 3.4**). Moreover, no floor level corresponding to this new stratum was noted in hall [6] outside so it is difficult to understand how the objects would have functioned within the space of room 8. Barreca's descriptions are of no help in this regard, and one illustration is confusing for it depicts the "baetyl" on the floor of stratum B to which it does not belong (*MS II*: plate 9). The issue is further complicated if the bronze representation of a seated male figure pouring water into a bowl (*MS II*: plates 26-27), is considered: it was lifted from stratum A, yet it is identical in style to a bronze representation of a seated male lyre player (*MS III*: plate 38) retrieved from stratum C of room 7, clearly sealed by a floor or trampling level

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[7] See also Amadasi Guzzo 1990: 83, but note that the findspot she gives – room 19 – is wrong: it should be room 16, that is room 7 in **FIGURE 90**.

(*piano di calpestio*) (**Table 3.12**) (Barreca 1986a: Nos 9-10). Unfortunately no subsequent study has raised the issue of archaeological context of these exceptional finds and Barreca's interpretations have been taken at face value.

Barreca dated what he called the 'temple phase' to the second half of the third century BC (stratum B) on the basis of the pottery lamps and a Punic coin. But a close reading of the preliminary reports shows that dating was fraught with some difficulties. Barreca does admit that the chronological picture he builds is tentative and preliminary (*MS II*: 50 n. 1) and on several occasions he points out that little was known about Phoenician and Punic pottery from Sardinia at the time of the excavation in order to provide secure dating (*MS III*: 11 n. 2, 13 n. 1, 27 n. 1, 43 n. 1); but since then, the chronological picture provided in the preliminary reports has been accepted in the general literature (Tore 1989b; Moscati 1983) and it has not undergone any alterations by the excavator (Barreca 1984c).

Further excavation was carried out in and around the building in 1965 including thirteen sondages (*saggi*) and four test trenches (*sondaggi esplorativi*)[8] to throw more light on the function of the edifice, and to unravel more about the complex stratigraphy of the site, which in Barreca's words was hardly touched upon the previous year (*MS III*: 10-11). Most of the conclusions reached in the 1964 (*MS II*) report remained unaltered.

It remains to be seen how Monte Sirai fits into a more general picture and whether the characteristics which define the *Mastio* turn up elsewhere (CHAPTER IV).

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[8] '[...] sondaggio esplorativo, tendente esclusivamente ad appurare l'altezza dell'interro.' (*MS III*: 17)

3.8.7 High Place of Tanit (*Alto luogo di Tanit*), Nora

Site visit: 9 April 1995; September 1995; 19 April 1997

Reported: Pesce 1961; Tore 1991

Published: Patroni 1902, 1904

Description. In July 1901, during archaeological excavations undertaken at Capo di Pula (ancient Nora) in Sardinia, Giovanni Patroni announced the discovery of a temple dedicated to the goddess Tanit (**FIGURES 93, 94**). In the report published in the *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità* (Patroni 1902), Patroni explains how he was intrigued by 'megalithic' remains, thought to belong to a nuraghe, situated on high ground in the centre of the peninsula. When the excavation was being undertaken, it was noted that the 'very ancient remains' were dissimilar to those from nuragic times: they consisted of a large rectangular building with elevated terraces. This type of architecture, according to Patroni, recalled Oriental architectural canons, and that the elevated platform or terrace could have been meant for an altar. Indeed, this construction would have been 'the principal temple of the Phoenician colony, which the newcomers would have hastened to build in the most central part of the city'. Definite proof of the religious nature of the site came from a pyramidal block of trachyte stone discovered on the 20 July near 'the upper foundations': 'undoubtedly' according to Patroni, 'a primitive representation of the goddess Tanit'. The excavator concluded his account by saying that the name which he liked to give to the remains which he had discovered, 'Temple of Tanit', was justifiable on these grounds.[1]

In his major publication on Nora, Patroni confirmed his conclusions regarding the 'temple of Tanit' (Patroni 1904: 26-41). He supplied a plan and sections of the

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[1] 'E quella che in ogni caso sarebbe la più probabile delle ipotesi, io la credo provata da un trovamento decisivo. Il 20 luglio, presso le fondazioni superiori che si andavano scoprendo, fu trovata qualche cosa che i secoli non avevano distrutto, e che per vera fortuna non era andata a finire, come tanta parte degli edifici di Nora, nelle case moderne della vicina Pula. È dessa una piramide triangolare di pietra trachitica, alta m. 0,56 ed avente alla base m. 0,32 circa di lato. Sebbene alquanto smussata, si vede che era stata accuratamente levigata. In essa deve riconoscersi, senza dubbio alcuno, la forma primitiva sotto la quale era adorata la dea Tanit, forma che rimane poi nelle rappresentanze schematiche delle stele figurate anche più tarde, e cui si aggiungono le braccia uncinate e la testa circolare per ravvicinarla alla figura umana. È dunque abbastanza giustificato il battesimo di Tempio di Tanit che mi piace dare ai ruderi da me scoperti.' (Patroni 1902: 80-1)

remains he had uncovered and some photos (Patroni 1904: figs 5, 6 and plates 4.2, 5, 6) (**FIGURE 95**). In his report he described how the platform (*platea*) he discovered measured 11 by 10 m. and was orientated with the corners. The NW wall of the platform was missing but traces of rock-levelling was found attesting to its existence. The platform was made of fairly large unmortared stones. The corner stones (three survived) were relatively large measuring 2.25 by 1.00 m. (E corner) and 1.25 by 10.95 (W corner). The stones were granite, while the S corner which was more irregular was trachyte. In the middle of this platform and on top of it, another square structure (*sostruzione*) or 'cube' (*dado*) (measuring 5.90 by 5.90 m.) was built of small irregular stones. The space between the outer walls of the lower platform and the upper cube was filled on the SW side by 'very compact earth [...] probably pounded and crushed by the builders'. On the SE side, the space was subdivided into four small spaces by three walls built of small stones set into a mortar of yellow sand 'very dissimilar to Roman cement' (Patroni 1904: 28). The interevening spaces here, and on the NE and NW were filled with rubble (*riempimento a massicciata*) (Patroni 1904: 28). Even the interior of the central cube was divided into two unequal spaces by a wall running NW-SE, and the N corner was filled by a heap of stones (*pietrame*). Beyond the lower platform Patroni identified other structural remains, but only on the NE side were they in contact with it. Indeed, two walls constructed of ashlar rough sandstone blocks were found butting the NE walls of the platform and were therefore considered 'later than the central building'. Patroni concluded that these walls together with a pounded floor to the S did not form part of the 'original archaic building' (or platform) but must have formed part of 'habitation quarters' built at a time when the platform had gone out of use and fell into ruins. He dated these remains to Roman Republican times on the basis of pottery and coins found in the area. Patroni uncovered another two walls to the NE of the platform, at right angles to each other, which he thought were contemporary with the 'archaic platform'. The walls are built of the same material as those for the platform with the corner marked out by an irregular trachyte boulder. Patroni referred to them as 'few unclear foundation remains which are lost in the outcropping rock' and he hypothesised that this was another (lower) platform or 'step' leading to the central cube; the building must have looked like a stepped pyramid. (Patroni 1904: 29-30).

Convinced that the remains he uncovered belonged to a Phoenician temple, Patroni looked for Near Eastern parallels to describe what the building must have looked like. He singled out the Ma'abed of Amrith (**3.1.2**) and the tabernacles of Aïn el-Hayât (**3.1.3**) as good parallels where a central cube served as tabernacle for the sacred symbol. The reverse of a Roman coin minted for the city of Byblos (**FIGURE 29a**), moreover, provided a better analogy: here was a conical stone - 'symbol of the deity' - placed on top of a horned open-air altar. The altar was surrounded by a colonnade resting on an elevated platform with a staircase leading up to it. Patroni believed (1904: 38-41) that proof of the existence of a colonnade at Nora could be found in the discovery of a capital in the vicinity of the excavated remains. Despite the certainty with which Patroni accepted the analogies, he maintained that not enough information was available to allow a graphic reconstruction of the building with all the necessary details (1904: 41).[2]

The second excavator of the remains, Gennaro Pesce, accepted the interpretations put forward by Patroni (Pesce 1961, 1978). He uncovered the fourth NW side of the square platform and corrected the plan drawn up by Patroni.[3] Unfortunately, however, the updated plan and the report of the excavations were never published. Pesce added more to Patroni's reconstruction of the temple: an altar built on top of a rectangular platform where the offerings could be made, opposite the baetyl and alongside a basin containing 'blessed water for ritual ablutions'. He even accepted Near Eastern antecedents for the remains, calling them a Canaanite style 'high place' (*luogo alto*) known from the Bible; a label which he wrongly ascribed to Patroni (Pesce 1978: 49). In fact, it was Paolino Mingazzini who introduced the term to denote 'an open-air altar placed on the highest point of the city', when he compared

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[2] 'Di qualche altro elemento che potrebbe confermare la ricostruzione ideale dell'edificio che qui si propone - e che però resta troppo indeterminata nei suoi particolari per poter pensare a tradurla graficamente [...]' (1904: 41)

[3] It is clear that the NW wall existed and that each corner of the central structure was marked by a large stone (Pesce 1978: 48, n. 18). It is not clear, however, how Patroni failed to identify its remains saying instead that the stones had been carried away: '[...] il lato settentrionale non è rinconoscibile per esserne asportate fin le ultime pietre.'(1902:79).

the remains at Nora to another alleged 'high place' he tentatively identified at Phoenician Sulcis (Sant'Antioco) (1948: 79-80) **(3.8.8)** (**FIGURE 100b**).[4]

Discussion. The religious nature of the remains has been accepted and defended by many scholars (Harden 1962: 40; Barreca 1970: 30; 1986: 311; Siddu 1984: 130; Moscati 1980: 160; Amadasi Guzzo 1992: 315; Tore 1989b: 36, 63 notes 57, 58), while others have omitted the site from their list of sanctuaries and temples without giving a reason for doing so (**Table 1.1**). Others have proposed other functions for the archaeological remains. Mingazzini, for instance, suggests that the 'high place' was probably transformed into a lighthouse in Roman Republican times (1948: 79, n. 8), while Bondì (1980) has argued that the layout of the remains are more suggestive of a fortified edifice, drawing parallels with the keep or *mastio* at Monte Sirai to sustain his hypothesis (see also Ribichini & Xella 1994: 108). Recently, Tore (1991) has argued that the discovery of six blocks of an Egyptianising cornice below and along the NE slope of the hill would confirm the religious nature of the site, implying that the blocks would have crowned the original monument on the hill, but nowhere in the article does he state how the blocks would have ended where they are (pers. comm. Giovanni Tore 1997).

Confusion has pervaded the contributions related to this monument. In an effort to provide Nora with its Phoenician and Punic temple authors have been begging the question, providing fanciful reconstructions and drawing wrong conclusions. Even Patroni's original account has been overlooked. For example, no one seems to have noted Patroni's remark that the capital was *not* found within the remains but in the *vicinity*.[5] The result is that no one has questioned Patroni's reconstruction of the colonnade. In actual fact, the capital was lifted from a position so far away from the hilltop (point marked C in Patroni's map (1904: plate 6; **FIGURE**

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[4] '[...] comunque, anche a Nora vedrei un "luogo alto" ossia un altare all'aria aperta posto anche lì sul punto più alto della città; ma non un tempio vero e proprio.' (Mingazzini 1948: 80)

[5] Pesce (1961: 59): the capital was found 'up here' (*quassu*) (also Pesce 1978: 48); Chiera (1978: 52): the capital was found 'within the remains of the "temple"' (*tra i resti del suddetto "tempio"*); Siddu (1984: 130): 'inside this area [high place of Tanit] [...] a capital was found' *(all'interno di quest'area furono rinvenuti una piramidetta [...] e un capitello [...]*); see Angiolillo 1989: 212, fig. 17.

94) 150 m. away from the presumed "temple of Tanit" at point D), that its alledged connection with the remains uncovered here is immediately brought into question and can be held to be untenable due to lack of evidence. Unacceptable is also Pesce's argument that the column (*colonna votiva*) is proof of the religious nature of the site (Pesce 1978: 48), as is also his unfounded interpretation or speculation (1961: 59) that the layout of the remains 'recalls vaguely the internal partitions of a Greek temple with *proanos*, *naos* and *opistodomos*' but that at Nora the *naos* is divided into two for a divine couple, Tanit and Baal Hammon. Where exactly this layout can be observed (given the lack of a plan, but even with one at hand) is beyond one's imagination![6]

A site inspection does not throw any more light on the problem than is available from the accounts of Patroni (1902, 1904) and Pesce (1978). In fact, the structural relationships between the walls can be confirmed. Only the part of the remains (the wall and pounded floor) butting the NE wall does no longer exist and cannot be checked, while the spaces between the walls in the inner part of the central rectangular structure have been emptied of the original fill material (presumably in Pesce's time). In conclusion, it is difficult to present a case to defend the religious nature of these remains.

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[6] In an addendum to his book Pesce (1961: no page) notes that his conclusion about Greek parallels for the layout is perhaps fortuitous (*è forse fortuita*).

3.8.8 Ma'abed, Nora

Site visit: 9 April 1995, September 1995, 19 April 1996

Reported: Pesce 1955

Published: —

Description and discussion. Excavations at Capo di Pula in Sardinia between 1952-1960 uncovered remains of what the excavator, Gennaro Pesce, called a 'Ma'abed' in a published notice (Pesce 1955) (**FIGURE 93**). The remains consisted of a rectangular platform built of ashlar sandstone blocks, measuring 1.60 m. long by 2.10 m. in width. The height of the blocks was 0.18 m. The platform is located behind the apse of a building identified by Pesce as a sanctuary to Eshmun-Esclapius, on the tip of the low lying headland called by the locals *Sa punta 'e su colòru* (*la punta della biscia* or Cape of the Snakes) (**FIGURE 96**).[1] Near the platform but at a higher level, Pesce recovered an eroded sandstone slab sculpted in relief with fifteen *uraeus* serpents and a winged disk on a shallow hollow moulding below it (1955: plates 1-2). The slab measured 2.07 m. long at the top and 1.55 m. at the bottom, 0.65 m. in height, and its maximum width was 0.31 m. Pesce associated the sculpted slab with the platform. He suggested that the slab formed an architrave of a small aedicule or shrine built on the platform, recalling similar monuments surveyed by Renan in the Phoenician homeland at Amrith in the territory of Arwad (*Ma'abed* **3.1.5** and Aïn el-Hayât **3.1.2**). Pesce also noted that the reconstruction he proposed for the *Ma'abed* at Nora recalled the representations of aedicules on the stelae from the tophets at Sulcis (1955: 478, n. 4, fig. 1), and of a terracotta shrine from Achzib in the Levant (1966a: 148; see Culican 1976: plate 1, b). In his first publication Pesce does not provide a date for the monument, claiming only that it was to be placed in the 'Phoenician-

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[1] What has been identified by Pesce (1961: 60, figs 32-36) as a sanctuary to Eshmun-Esclapius consists of an area with structural remains dating to the second century BC, and therefore to the Roman Republic period (Tore 1989b: 36 n. 59). Tronchetti (1986: 60) notes that there are no clear structural remains which can be dated to an earlier Punic phase, despite assertions to the contrary by others (e.g. Amadasi Guzzo 1992: 315). Pesce's confirmation that the Roman sanctuary had a Punic antecedant rests solely on a consideration of the architectural layout of an apse in the building: its division into two recalls, according to Pesce and Barreca after him (1986: 311-312), similar Punic sanctuaries in Sardinia (*cf.* Chiera 1978: 48-49). Whereas a case can be made for defending the religious nature of the site during Roman times from the statuary retrieved within (Tronchetti 1986: fig. 38), there is simply no evidence to do likewise for a Punic period.

Punic period' of Nora's history (1955: 482). In his standard work on Punic Sardinia published in 1961, Pesce supplied a new reconstruction in elevation of the monument (1961: fig. 37) (**FIGURE 97**), taking into consideration the remarks made by Lézine,[2] and proposes a date in the fourth century BC (1961; 1966a: 148-149). Moreover, he saw the aedicule as part of a larger religious complex, a 'high place' incorporating a pit, a rock-cut altar and a cistern (1961: 60-63).

Pesce's reconstruction has found acceptance in a number of Italian publications on Phoenician and Punic Nora (e.g. Barreca 1986; Chiera 1978: 46-47; Tore 1989b: 63 n. 55; Tronchetti 1986: 57-61; Siddu 1984: 130). William Culican (1976: 53) even suggested that the 'naos shrine' at Nora, like that of Amrith, might well have been empty.[3]

If this site at Nora is taken in isolation, hardly any evidence is at hand to defend the religious nature of the remains, and certainly no data is available to suggest that action directed towards a divinity took place here.

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[2] Lézine (1960: 39-40, fig. 22) refers to Pesce's reconstruction, claiming that the platform of such monuments had to be higher to give worshippers a good view of the deity or religious symbol placed in it. In fact, he suggests that the platform would have been at least a metre in height.

[3] Culican discusses Nora and Amrith in the context of aniconographic fetishes ("deliberate emptiness") in Phoenician and Punic religious symbolism. It is interesting to note the lack of a reference to Culican's pertinent remarks in an interesting publication by Mettinger (1995) which treats 'empty-space aniconism'.

3.8.9 Grotta del Papa (Isola Tavolara), Olbia

Site visit: —

Reported: Tore, Amucano & Filigheddu 1992

Published: unexcavated

Description and discussion. Grotta del Papa is a small cave situated right at sea level at the bottom of a cliff-face on the north-eastern side of the island of Tavolara opposite the port of Olbia in Sardinia (**FIGURES 98, 99**). It gets its name from a 30 metre high monolith at Punta del Papa (Pope Point) which is visible from the cave's entrance and which resembles a pope's mitre. The archaeological potential of the cave has only recently been put forward in a multi-authored article (Tore, Amucano & Filigheddu 1992), but an earlier visitor to the cave had reported the discovery there of archaeological material (Furreddu (1964) in Amucano 1992: 545 n. 15). Giovanni Tore has studied the few remains found right inside the cave where a fresh water spring is situated. They consist of pottery lamps, small metal blades, and fragments of terracotta figurines and of a pottery mask. The majority of finds would suggest a date that spans the 3rd - 1st centuries BC (Tore 1992: 533-537). By calling them 'votive finds' (*materiali votivi*) Tore ascribed to the place a religious function, citing similar cave sites from Sardinia as parallels (Tore 1992: 537, n. 12).

In his contribution Marco Agostino Amucano concentrates on the relation between Grotta del Papa and the long accepted identification of the island of Tavolara with Ptolemy's *Hermaea insula*, which the Latin geographer places off the east coast of Sardinia opposite the *Olbianus portus* (Amucano 1992: 542ff.). By using a multitude of sources (maps, navigators' handbooks, ancient sources), Amucano argues convincingly that Tavolara played a crucial role for navigators because it was a conspicuous landmark guarding the entrance to one of the best ports on the eastern coast of Sardinia, 125 miles away from mainland Italy. Indeed, Tavolara qualifies as a promontory like all the other places given the epithet *hermaea* by the Classical

authors.[1] As for its position, the cave must have been an ideal place to house a cult associated with sailors (Amucano 1992: 547).[2] For Amucano, the strategic location of Tavolara and its majestic skyline turn the entire island (not just the monolith at Punta del Papa) into an enormous herm (hence the epithet *hermaea*) which marks a geographic, ethnic and cultural boundary. Moreover, the sanctification of promontories to certain divinities is a reflection of a marine ideology where capes become geographical boundaries feared by sailors for the strong currents around them.[3]

On the basis of the finds made inside the cave the suggestion that ritual activity took place at the site is not strong enough. It is true that the few pieces were of an unusual form and it is hard to think to what utilitarian use were terracottas put inside a relatively inaccessible site such as this. But to establish that these objects were used in the course of actions related to a divinity is difficult. Taken in conjunction with Amucano's interpretation a modest case for a religious site could however be made. The problem with Amucano's contribution is, however, that he relies on evidence from other sites (Grotta Regina, Gorham's Cave, Cueva de Es Cuieram) to argue his case, and by doing so he is falling victim to circular arguments. His suggestion is an impressive one but a clear answer is not provided.

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[1] Pesce (1961: 47) identifies the *Hermaion Akron* with Capo Marrargiu: 'Considerato che due località dello stesso nome erano, l'una presso Cartagine, l'altra fuori delle Colonne d'Ercole, si pensa che anche qui fosse uno scale fenicio con relativo santuario al dio Tauut o Hay-Tou o Adone o Eshmun, assimilato dai Greci al loro Hermes; on pg. 49 he identifies *Hermaia Nesos* with Tavolara.

[2] '[...] in virtù tanto della sua ubicazione strategica quanto dell'immediata come esclusiva raggiungibilità dal mare, potesse offrire i requisiti ideali per un culto popolare di naviganti e marinai [...]'

[3] Amucano 1992: 551 and n. 30 where the reference to Mastino (1991) owes much to Ellen Semple's work on 'templed promontories' of 1931 (see below **4.6**).

3.9.10 Sulcis (Sant'Antioco)

Site visit: 10 April 1995; 17 April 1997

Reported: Taramelli 1908; Mingazzini 1948

Published: unexcavated

Description and discussion. In an article published in 1948, Paolino Mingazzini suggested that the remains visible within the foundations of a small 17th century AD fortress perched on a hillock on the island of Sant'Antioco (Taramelli 1908) (**FIGURE 75**), belonged to a Phoenician sanctuary (Mingazzini 1948). The ashlar blocks were large and laid out so as to form a rectangular structure, with its longitudinal axis orientated NE-SW. The sides measured 8 m (NE), 13.65 m (NW), 8.70 m (SW), while only two blocks were visible on the SE side (**FIGURE 100a**). Mingazzini dated the remains to the 3rd century BC on the basis of Etruscan and Campanian pottery found in the surrounding fields.

Mingazzini concluded that the sanctuary was a Phoenician 'high place' (*luogo alto*).[1] It was placed on the top of a hillock and occupied a strategic position over the surrounding landscape, 'sì che era presumibile che il fumo degli animali arrostiti giungesse più agevolmente alle nari del dio [...]'! Mingazzini thought that the rectangular structure would have served as a sort of platform for an aedicule or an idol (1948: 78-9).

Mingazzini's suggestions based, as he says, on a Sunday excursion to the site with Giovanni Lilliu, have been criticised by Piero Bartoloni (1971), after the religious status of the site had been accepted by others (Moscati 1968d: 116; Pesce 1961: 56-8, 1966a: 147).[2] Bartoloni corrected Mingazzini's plan of the remains pointing out that there were in fact two rectangular structures adjacent to one another (**FIGURE 100c**). He concluded that the hillock must have sited a Punic defensive

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[1] Mingazzini (1948: 78 notes 4-6) refers to Vincent (1907: 92, 147 n. 1) and Gsell (1920: 392-3) in his discussion of Phoenician "high places".

outpost or tower on account of the extra-ordinary stonework employed in its building. He argued that no votive objects were found in the area that could imply a religious function for the remains, despite the conclusions reached by Mingazzini. He concorded with Mingazzini, however, that excavations were necessary to date the remains (Bartoloni 1971: 154). The military nature of the remains has been accepted by Barreca (1978: 118; 1986: 317; also Acquaro 1988c: 217) together with Moscati who changed his previous opinion (1986: 243).

On the basis of what is known of the site, there is no justification in describing the remains under consideration as a religious site.

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[2] Culican (1991: 509) still insisted that: '[...] there is important evidence for later sanctuaries in the Fortino area, itself probably the 'high place' of sacrifice for the early Phoenician colony, built upon nuraghic foundations.'

3.8.11 Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao

Site visit: —

Reported: Barreca 1983: 298-300; 1984b: 123-124, fig. 52

Published: Moscati & Uberti 1990: 79-91

Description and discussion. In a locality in the Iglesiente mountains in SW Sardinia at Strumpu Bagoi, Terreseu (territory of Narcao), three excavation campaigns conducted by Ferruccio Barreca between 1971-1973 revealed a sanctuary to Demeter (*santuario di Demeter*) going back to the third century BC. The site is on an important route that passes through the Iglesiente mountain range to join the valley of the river Cixerri and the valley of Narcao, about 18 km. from Sulcis (**FIGURE 75**). The excavations started in 1971 after agricultural works uncovered some remains in the area. An excavation report has not been published but brief accounts of the work undertaken accompanied by a plan and a couple of photographs are available (Barreca 1983: 298-300, 1984b: 123-124, fig. 52; 1986: figs 85-87).[1] A catalogue of the statuary has also been compiled (Moscati & Uberti 1990).

Barreca noted that the sanctuary is divided into two areas (**FIGURE 101**): the first to the SE includes a well against which a small aedicule (measuring about 1 m. square) with an entrance to the SE and a niche at the back wall was constructed; the second to the NW, which includes a series of five square altars (*altari*) (measuring 0.60 by 0.60 m.), aligned infront of a rectangular chapel (*sacello*) and a rectangular podium (*basamento*) adjacent to it. The podium measures 4 by 2 m. and is 1.20 m. high; the chapel, oriented NW-SE, measures 6 by 3 m., and was built above a low podium 0.80 m. high. The space within the chapel is divided into two: an outer vestibule (*vestibolo*) leading to a higher (by 0.30 m.) platform (*piattaforma*) where the cult object (a statue or baetyl) would have been placed as suggested by a mark (0.30 m. square) on the *cocciopesto* flooring. Built around the W corner of the chapel is a square construction (measuring 2 by 2 m.) with its own entrance on the SE side.

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1 Note that the photograph of the site reproduced in Barreca 1986: fig. 87 has been inverted producing a mirror image in respect to the published site plans.

Excavating within it Barreca revealed a series of depositions. Underneath a layer of roof collapse, he reported the discovery of a small altar constructed of irregular stonework, 0.30 m. high, surrounded by numerous pottery figurines and lamps. Ash and fragments of pigs' bones were strewn over the altar and the whole room. The mould-made statuary included incense burners shaped like a head (*kernophoroi*) (see **PLATE 20c**),[2] figurines with a piglet and a torch (**PLATE 20d**),[3] representations of a dove,[4] and female figurines with outstretched arms (**PLATE 20a, b**).[5] Underneath the altar, Barreca reported the discovery of a sacred deposit (*deposito sacro*) contained within a small rectangular enclosure surrounded by stones: a terracotta female statuette with outstretched arms surrounded by urns containing sacrificial remains, incense burners and a four-spouted pottery lamp; a photograph of the ensemble is available (Barreca 1986: fig. 86). Barreca noted that the statuette was facing the N corner of the building, with its back to the entrance. A bronze coin of C. Cassius Celer dated to 15 BC was found with the material. Underneath this deposit Barreca found another terracotta representation of a female holding an infant on the left shoulder,[6] dating on stylistic grounds to the third century BC.

Barreca noted that the importance of the site lies in the appearance of a sanctuary to Demeter in late Punic Sardinia and its eventual survival well into Roman Imperial times. He claims that the Greek cult of Demeter was adapted by the Carthaginians: Punic are, in fact, the orientation of the chapel and adjoining room together with the construction techniques adopted, and the syncretism with the cult of Astarte to which belonged the symbol of the dove. Barreca also saw continuity between the Nuragic cult of the well-temple and the Punic cult to Demeter.

In a recent synthesis, Moscati (1993a: 77-82) stressed the persistence of the mixture of Greek and Punic cultural elements well into Roman Imperial times, accepting Barreca's conclusions about the sacred nature of the buildings and deposits (also Tore 1989b: 50). Despite the shortcomings with which the site has been reported

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[2] Moscati & Uberti 1990: Nos 34-36, plate 28.1-3.
[3] Moscati & Uberti 1990: Nos 16-17, plate 27.2-3.
[4] Moscati & Uberti 1990: No. 42, plate 29.4.
[5] Moscati & Uberti 1990: Nos 1, 6, 8, 10, plates 25.1-3, 26.1.

(especially the lack of a proper description of the stratigraphy accompanied by section drawings), the structures and material described by Barreca for each of the three phases of deposition within the smaller room are indeed suggestive of ritual activity, and the case which is presented is a strong one. While nothing seems to have been lifted from the room Barreca calls the chapel and from the rectangular podium, sufficient finds were made in the smaller room to suggest actions commensurate with a ritual interpretation: redundancy is visible in the 42 figurines found on a platform or table mixed with ash and pigs' bone; indeed, the quantity of figurines is quite impressive given the rather limited room space (2 by 2 m.). Indeed, it is possible to think that this small room had a more active function than simply a store for the figurines: the pigs' bones and zoomorphic representation of the pig allows us to see an association between the two classes of data and suggest that we have here a particular deposition related to this animal species, with the platform or table serving as a special facility for the location of these items. This would be the third and last phase of deposition with a *terminus post quem* provided by the coin dated to 15 BC coming from the preceding phase. Moscati (1993a: 80) also makes reference to a coin of the younger Faustina who died in 186 AD to show the late chronology of this phase. For the second phase, the same type of finds were made within a rectangular stone enclosure but the anthropomorphic representation is one: a figure with outstretched arms. This was found in association with pottery lamps and vessels thought to have been receptacles for burning incense, together with urns containing sacrificial remains. Unfortunately, we do not know what type of remains were contained in the urns, and neither what the urns looked like. For the first phase, Barreca only makes reference to one statuettes. Continuation in the activities throughout the three phases can only be claimed on the grounds of the stylistic similarities between the statuary of the third phase and the statuette from the second and first phase respectively.

To distinguish cult image from votary at Narcao is not without problems, unless reference is immediately made to an iconography understood from elsewhere. Size is hardly a helpful criterion because most figures fall within the same range (less

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[6] Moscati & Uberti 1990: No. 14, plate 26.2.

than 25 cm.) and the outstretched arms can be interpreted as gestures of power or of epiphany and adoration. Raising this point might appear a shade superfluous when so much is known about the cult that would explain these statues from elsewhere; but when references in the published catalogue are made to statuettes from private collections for which an archaeological context is missing (Moscati & Uberti 1990: 89-90), we run the risk of robbing the evidence from this one crucial site of its full potential.

3.8.12 Capo San Marco, Tharros

Site visit: 11 April 1995; September 1995

Reported: Barreca 1958

Published: —

Description. During survey work undertaken by Ferrucio Barreca at Capo San Marco in Sardinia, remains of a small stone construction were noted in an area right at the edge of the cliffs (at 56 m. above sea level) on the western tip of the peninsula (**FIGURE 102**). Given the good state of preservation of the remains, a decision was taken to undertake excavations at the site straight away and in 1958 Ferrucio Barreca published the preliminary results of his work (Barreca 1958).[1]

The foundations were covered only by a layer of material (*interro*) which was nowhere more than 0.70 m. in depth, and as a result 'the entire construction was brought to light very quickly'. This consisted of a building (12.65 by 7.50 m.), composed of two main rooms (B and C) separated by a wall (**FIGURE 104**). The larger room (7.70 by 4.10 m.) was divided into two by a row of four columns and two pilasters which no longer survive but which have left their traces on the floors. Inside the room no remains were recorded other than a small siliceous limestone (*calcare siliceo*) block shaped like a pyramid (0.48 m. high and 0.30 m. wide). It was found next to the NE wall of room [B] opposite the entrance, and in axis with it. Next to the pyramidal block two sandstone blocks (measuring 0.47 x 0.53 x 0.28 m.) were also retrieved. Outside room [B], the remaining space [A] between the row of columns and the south wall (7.70 by 2.50 m.) led to the second room [C] (5.30 by 3.30 m.) through a narrow doorway (0.70 m. wide). A stone platform or bench built against the entire length of the NE wall of the room was also revealed (0.42 m. high and 0.77 m. wide). Barreca noted also a circular flat prominence (about 0.10 m. high) in the plastered floor, one metre away from the bench. Barreca dated the building to the 5th century BC on the basis of the technique employed in the construction of the walls. The date

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[1] This was Ferrucio Barreca's first excavation for the *Soprintendenza* under the directorship of Gennaro Pesce.

was raised to the 7th century BC in subsequent publications (Barreca 1986: 108, 286; 1987: 26). He also suggested that the building was abandoned in Roman (Augustan) times due to the lack of sigillata pottery. The dating has recently been called into question by pointing out that the building technique is not necessarily archaic and that the pottery which has been studied by Paolo Bernardini to late Punic or Roman Republican times (Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 47).

Barreca interpreted the remains as belonging to a 'Phoenician-Punic temple'. He was of the opinion that the pyramidal block of stone that must have been placed on the other two blocks which served as a platform, was proof of the 'sacred nature' of the site. Indeed, the stone pyramid was 'undoubtedly' a '*simulacrum*': a baetyl of the goddess Tanit (Barreca 1958: 411).[2] According to Barreca, the tripartite plan of the building, oriented to the north, was reminiscent of Phoenician-Punic temples known elsewhere, citing the sanctuary at Byblos and the Punic tophet sanctuary at El Hofra in Tunisia as the closest parallels.[3]

Discussion. Despite his confidence with the interpretation of the remains, Barreca still concluded his report by saying that further work had to be conducted on the site especially with regards to chronology. He reminds us that his observations are 'preliminary' until further sondages are carried out in order to present a final study.[4]

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[2] 'Basterebbe a rivelare il carattere sacro di questo edificio la piccola piramide rinvenuta nell'ambiente B, nella quale è certo da riconoscere un betile di Tanit [...]' (Barreca 1958: 411) In a subsequent publication, Barreca (1984a: 160) claims that the temple was probably dedicated to Astarte. Pesce (1961: 92) informs us that the same identification (that is, Tanit) had been made by G. Patroni at Nora (3.8.7) when he retrieved the pyramidal stone, and which made him conclude that the edifice there was a temple.

[3] 'Ma è interessante notare come in questo edificio tarrense siano racchiusi, anche se in proporzioni assai ridotte, i caratteri essenziale del tempio fenicio-punico, quali ci sono noti attraverso numerosi ed illustri esempi: un luogo elevato, sul quale i muri perimetrali delimitano un'area sacra comprendente un ambiente maggiore con un simulacro (spesso un betilo) al centro ed un'entrata a colonne su di un lato ed un ambiente minore affiancato al primo, con un carattere di dipendenza e nello stesso tempo particolarmente appartato.' (Barreca 1958: 411). Barreca refers to the temple at Capo San Marco when he discusses the remains he had surveyed on the opposite headland of the Gulf of Oristano, at Capo Frasca (1970: 29; 1975: 126; 1986: 280; also Tore 1973: 233-235; 1989b: 70 n. 124) (**FIGURE 102**). Here Barreca noted the foundations of a rectangular structure (12 by 10 m.) built of sandstone ashlar blocks and rubble set in mud. Barreca thought that the remains dated to Punic times on the basis of the construction technique as well as the sherd scatter in the area. He also suggested that this could be a religious building (*sacello di un tempio*) given its location, right at the edge of the promontory, recalling Capo San Marco.

[4] '[...] di trarre alcune conclusioni preliminari e di carattere generale, in attesa di poter compiere i saggi e le osservazioni necessarie per uno studio completo e definitivo' and 'certo, molti problemi

But to our knowledge no further fieldwork was ever undertaken on the site. The observations put forward in the report were repeated again by Barreca in a number of publications (e.g. Barreca 1970: 31) where he even considers the temple to form part of the Phoenician archaic acropolis which must have been in this part of the peninsula (Barreca 1962: 34; also Culican 1991: 510). The religious nature of the site was accepted by Gennaro Pesce (1961: 67) who lamented that the votive offerings had not been discovered (1966b: 172-3). He postulated that room [B] was not roofed and contained only the baetyl: the aniconic image of the goddess Tanit identified from the incision on the stone representing the vulva, symbolic of the Mother Goddess (1967: fig 84).[5] He even concluded that the smaller room (A) 'must have been the most sacred area of the shrine' (*sacello*), the biblical "Holy-of-Holies" (1966a: 141). He disagreed with Barreca, however, in seeing the headland as the site of the Phoenician acropolis, and postulated (1966b: 83) that the temple was isolated, a 'high place' visited by pilgrims. Serena Maria Cecchini (1984-85; *contra* Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 47) confirmed the Semitic antecedents of the plan of the building while Giovanni Tore insists that the temple was extra-urban (Tore 1989: 44) and others that it is simply a 'small rustic temple' (*tempietto rustico*) (Acquaro & Finzi 1986: 61; also Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 45-7).

Taking the site at Capo San Marco in isolation it is difficult to argue in favour of religious ritual on the basis of the remains uncovered there. The excavations produced no evidence suggestive of repeated use of the site, and Barreca's claim that the building was of tripartite plan has been brought into question, as has the high chronology he proposed (see Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 47); indeed the fifth-century BC date remains hypothetical. Moreover, it could be argued that the building served a utilitarian function. An alternative hypothesis could be that perched as it is on the tip of a headland, the building could have served as a look-out post for maritime

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restano ancora aperti, molte precisazioni vanno fatte e molti controlli debbono venir ancora effettuati, in primissimo luogo quelli relativi alla cronologia.' (Barreca 1958: 409 and 411)

5 'Nell'ambiente maggiore, che doveva essere a cielo scoperto ed accessibile da uno dei lati lunghi, provisto di quattro colonne o pilastri, si trovava una base, sormontata da una picola piramide triangolare, immagine aniconica della dea Tanit. L'altro ambiente, che era coperto e contiene un bancone a piè di una delle pareti, destinato alle offerete votive, doveva essere la parte più recondita e santa dell'edificio, il *Qòdesh Qodashim* significante propriamente *Santità delle Santità* ossia il *Sancta*

activities. Barreca could be justified in seeing a religious symbol in the pyramidal stone but without references to other parts of the Phoenician and Punic world the case for religious ritual at Capo San Marco is too weak.

Sanctorum.' Caption to Fig. 84: 'La dea Tanit in forma di piramide lapidea. Era l'idolo venerato nel piccolo santuario di Capo San Marco. Il segno della vulva inciso allude al concetto della Dea Madre.'

3.8.13 Temple of Demeter (*Tempio di Demetra*), Tharros

Site visit: 20 April 1997

Reported: Barreca 1984: 164, fig. 90

Published: —

Description and discussion. Situated on the summit of the Murru Mannu Hill is the site of an alleged temple to the Greek goddess Demeter (**FIGURES 103, 110b**) . The site is known only through some references in Barreca's works which describe it as 'a tripartite sanctuary and service annexes; founded between the fourth and third centuries BC, it was reconstructed in the Imperial Roman period' (1987a: 25; 1984a: 164; 1986: 108, 285). Terracotta figurines were recovered from a *favissa* in 1969 within the site, thus giving rise to the claim that this was an area sacred to Demeter (Tore 1989b: 45; Uberti 1975: 22, 35, plate 8).

Unfortunately, the excavations in the area are unpublished so excepting the figurines, we have no information about the rest of the finds presumably recovered from the site. As to whether we are justified in seeing a religious building here, the argument rests on two pieces of data: first, the tripartite layout and orientation of the alleged sanctuary, and secondly, the figurines. As for the layout, it is impossible to see the tripartite divisions in the only plan available of the site, and the orientation is WNW-ESE and not N as Barreca claims (Barreca 1984: 164 fig. 90). As for the figurines, I have not been able to locate a reference to their findspot.

Taking the site in isolation it is difficult to present a case for a religious building here.

3.8.14 Temple of Doric half-columns (*Tempio Monumentale*), Tharros

Site visit: 11 April 1995, 20 April 1997

Reported: —

Published: Pesce 1961a

Description. Excavations undertaken by Gennaro Pesce between 1958 and 1959 at Tharros, below the Spanish tower (Torre di San Giovanni) to the East (**FIGURES 102, 103**), uncovered the remains of what was referred to in the published report as the *Santuario Punico Monumentale* (Pesce 1961a), and later as the Temple of Doric half-columns (Barreca 1987). Pesce identified three building phases for the remains (**FIGURES 105, 106**).

The first and earliest phase (*il santuario primitivo*) consisted of an open area of rock (sandstone) outcrop, into which several pits were dug. The sloping area was surrounded by a *temenos* wall with an entrance to the SE. Pesce suggested that the pits or cavities were meant for libations or for burning incense or for placing offerings ('*bothroi*'), and that this type of sanctuary recalls Canaanite 'high places' (*alti luoghi*) noted by Vincent, and by Stewart Macalister for Gezer (Pesce 1961a: col. 341, n. 1). Pesce even refers to similar pits he uncovered at Nora (1961a: col. 342, n. 4; 1957: 87, fig. 56).

During the second phase (*santuario a semicolonne doriche*) a rectangular platform was cut into the rock outcrop. Pesce notes that the platform was orientated with the corners as was the norm with Phoenician temples. The sides of the platform were decorated with fluted Doric half-columns cut in relief (4 on the NE side, 5 - SW, 4 (two of which are reconstructed) - NW). Fluted pilasters were cut to mark the edge of the platform, forming corner pilasters at the N and W ends respectively. Each half-column appears to have been crowned with a Doric capital and an Egyptianising cavetto cornice cut in relief into an ashlar block. These were originally incorporated into the rock-cut platform in order to level out its sloping surface, but were found by the excavator in a later construction of squarish plan to the SE. A fragment of an

Aeolic-Cypriot capital, depicting two volutes separated by a central palmette, was also found in this construction and Pesce assumed that this and others crowned the pilasters. Pesce attempted a reconstruction in elevation of the complex, suggesting that the platform served as a foundation for an aedicule or *naos*: an oriental '*ma'abed*' (1961a: coll. 393-395, plate 13) (**FIGURE 107a**). Access to the aedicule was via a ramp or staircase laid out infront of the platform to the SE (1961a: col. 344). Pesce noted that the excavations revealed only the rock-cut and levelled areas where the ashlar blocks had been laid. These were taken away and incorporated into later constructions on the same spot, and in a levelling fill for a floor (*vespaio*) above the platform (Pesce 1961a: col. 375, figs. 43-47). From this fill, Pesce recovered other architectural and sculptural fragments including blocks of a cavetto cornice (1961a: coll. 373-375), a statue of a lion (1961a: coll. 385-386; a similar one was found in July 1960 immediately outside the limits of excavation to the SW - 1961a: col. 386 n. 2), and fragments of an *ureus* serpent in relief (1961a: coll. 389-392). He suggested that the cavetto cornice crowned the *naos* and the parapet flanking the staircase. An *anta*-capital (and another similar capital) pertaining to a Greek style was also recovered from the same fill together with part of the corresponding fluted pilaster (1961a: coll. 371-372). Pesce suggested that the *naos* must have been composed of a mixture of Greek and Egyptian architectural motifs, citing the adoption of a similar scheme at the mausoleum at Dougga in Tunisia, and on the stelae from the Sardinian tophets (1961a: coll. 375-6, n. 1). Moreover the Phoenician adoption of Egyptian motifs is known from the Ma'abed at Aïn el-Hayât (**3.1.1**) in the Levant and at Nora (**3.8.8**) in Sardinia (1961a: col. 391). The reconstruction of the *temenos* wall is more problematic but to the NE it is clear that a wall of ashlar blocks was built running parallel to the platform. On the opposite side, to the SW, Pesce placed the 'sacred woods' (*boschetto sacro*) adjacent to a deep well according to a scheme postulated for the Punic temple at Via Malta, Cagliari (1961a: col. 379). To the SE, the excavators also uncovered a meter-thick layer of terracotta objects which resembled nuts and almonds (1961a: col. 401). Hundreds of these small objects were retrieved suggesting to Pesce that they formed part of a votive hoard, terracotta substitutes of the real fruits.

Pesce gives a list of the material retrieved from 'the sacred area, around the platform and the late squarish construction' (1961a: coll. 396-399) . The stratum did not exceed the level of the rectangular platform with Doric half-columns (1961a: coll. 396, 399, plate 5). The finds included ceramic fragments, amphora handles stamped with Punic letters, a bone flute, and 12 Punic bronze coins. On the basis of the coins, and on the use of the Doric architectural order, Pesce dated the second building phase to the fourth-third centuries BC.[1] A similar monument could not be found in Sardinia, and Pesce refers to parallels in Syria and Mesopotamia; but these are rather 'vague' ('[...] sono vaghi e generici') (Pesce 1961a: coll. 436-438, n. 3).

According to Pesce, the Punic sanctuary of the second phase was abandoned or destroyed. The whole area comprising the remains described thus far, was covered over by a thick layer of quarry chippings. This layer was covered by a floor composed of a mixture of lime and sand, on which a Neo-Punic sanctuary (*Santuario Neopunico*) was built (Pesce 1961a: coll. 406-410). This marked the third building phase at the site, which included also the erection of the squarish-construction to the SE mentioned earlier (and which contained the decorated blocks from the second phase). This layer had to be destroyed by the excavators to reveal the rest of the remains which it sealed. Pesce suggested that a chapel must have been erected on this surface, perhaps to the SE above the squarish-construction. Despite the fact that no walls survived, the traces of their alignment could be inferred from the robber trenches. These suggested to Pesce a labyrinthine plan for the Punico-Roman temple. During this phase, a deep, narrow cistern was constructed to the west (1961a: coll. 413-419). Pesce suggested that the third phase could be dated to the end of Roman Republican times on the basis of the Roman coins retrieved from the layer of earth lying above the floor (1961a: coll. 439-440). He noted, however, that the area was disturbed during stone robbing and that the coins could have been washed down from the upper reaches of the hill, behind the construction to the NW.

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[1] Pesce (1961a: col. 436 n. 1) refers to the work of the architect Alexandre Lézine (1959) in discussing the introduction of the Greek Doric order in Carthage after 396 BC. In that year, the Carthaginians under Himilco had besieged Syracuse and sacked the sanctuary of Demeter. The Classical sources relate how the Carthaginians felt they had offended the Greek divinity and introduced the cult of Demeter and Kore to Carthage where they built a sanctuary to the divinities. On the introduction of the cult of Demeter and Kore in Carthage see Xella 1969.

Discussion. The religious nature of the remains uncovered by Pesce at Tharros has been accepted by many scholars, especially those pertaining to phase 2 (see Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 38-42; Cecchini 1992; Fantar 1986; Tore 1989b: 43). Moscati (1986: 292-3) agreed with the reconstruction and claims that the temple was the most important religious edifice of Punic Tharros, a point recently stressed by van Dommelen (1997b). Acquaro (1991; Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 42-45) has put forward, however, a different reconstruction for the building during phase 2 (**FIGURE 107b**). Rather than placing a shrine or aedicule above the rock-cut platform, he reconstructed an open-air altar, claiming that the measurements of the reconstructed complex are multiples of the Punic cubit (0.46 m) known from elsewhere in the Punic world. But he gives no reason for refuting Pesce's reconstruction, and no adequate explanation for his choice, simply that it is unlikely that the rock-cut platform served as foundation for a chapel (1991: 549).[2] In fact, he incorporates only some of the decorated architectural fragments in his reconstruction, while opting to leave out the Aeolic-Cypriot (or proto-Aeolic) capitals which he then uses to date the complex (1991: 549-550).

But the excavations of this complex are not without problems. As Pesce himself admitted in his report, the construction could only be defined in broad outline (1961a: coll. 340, 391-2 n. 2). Indeed, also the stratigraphy is produced schematically (1961a: col. 354 plate 5). Close reading of the report and a visit to the site make it immediately apparent that the complex uncovered here had a varied history which involved cutting and re-cutting of features in the rock which are difficult to date. It is also apparent that the area was used as a quarry, and at times it is difficult to make out which cuts in the rock correspond to quarrying or other activities. Furthermore, the stratigraphy revealed in certain areas seems to have been disturbed, as is suggested by Pesce's remark that earlier coins were found at a higher level from the later ones (1961a: col. 440). He even pointed out that stone robbing was carried out after the

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[2] 'La presenza di una canaletta di raccolta e convolgiamento e la coniderazione che dal punto di vista architettonico sembra improbabile che la pittaforma con le semicolonne scolpite sostenesse un'altra costruzione, danno credito all'ipotesi dell'altare [...].' (Acquaro 1991: 549)

floor of the third phase, and what appears to be a robber trench can be made out in one of his published illustrations (1961a: coll. 409-410 fig. 45).

The report does give a clear picture of the work undertaken, although Pesce's decision to omit measurements does not help. Also, detailed description of the deposits encountered in specific areas is lacking, so that assigning the finds to separate stratigraphic units is impossible, especially in view of Pesce's important remark that material from the upper reaches of the hill could have found its way down by various natural processes. For the purpose of our study, it is important to stress that there is *no* structural evidence for the alleged phase 1. The existence of this phase was only inferred by Pesce from the pits in the rock surface subsequently shaped in a rectangular platform. Of course, the lack of deposits from this phase could be explained away by the rock-cutting that took place later, which must have involved the removal of accumulated primary and secondary deposits. But on their own, the pits can hardly defend the religious nature of the site in phase 1. As for the second and third phases, Pesce *assumes* that the remains belonged to a religious construction without explaining why. Indeed, for phase 2, his argument rests mainly on the orientation of the rock-cut platform, and implicitly, on the high number of fine architectural fragments uncovered in the area - something unusual in a Phoenician or Punic context. His analogies with the reliefs on the stelae from the tophets do allow a plausible interpretation for the overall appearance of the monument: a hybrid of Egyptian, Greek and Phoenician decorative motifs. It is difficult, impossible even, to argue whether these fragments formed part of the same structure at the same time. What we know for certain is that they were found in association in the same levelling fill for a later floor. Nothing was uncovered to suggest redundancy, except the terracottas shaped like nuts or almonds, while the idea of a 'sacred grove' remains entirely conjectural. The only find suggestive of symbolism would be the *uraeus* fragment. The pottery recovered was only described as "Punic" or "Roman", and was so scantily illustrated in the report that to apply chronological tags to the material is wholly impossible.

Taking the site in isolation, it is hard to find justification in describing the site as a religious complex.

3.8.15 Temple K (*Tempietto K*), Tharros

Site visit: 20 April 1997

Reported: Pesce 1966b; Acquaro 1983

Published: —

Description and Discussion. The Pesce excavations at Tharros, on the E flanks of the hill above which is the Torre di San Giovanni, revealed remains of buildings which the excavator identified with a sacred complex surrounded by a *temenos* (Pesce 1966b: 159-163) (**FIGURE 103**). Archaeologists have focussed their attention on one part of the complex, a small building (measuring overall 5.13 by 3.38 m.) oriented W-E, consisting of a room, the *naos* (measuring 3.38 by 3.38 m.), built of ashlar blocks and brick reached by a flight of four steps (**FIGURES 108, 109a**). At either end of the stairs are the remains of two pillars which probably supported a roofed porch. A low platform or altar (*altare*) was built against the back wall of the inner room, crowned with an Egyptianising cavetto moulding. This building was identified by Pesce with a temple who also noticed that outside the *cella* or *naos* and beyond the staircase was a small platform reached by a flight of two steps. Midway along the steps, Pesce noted a low, square construction in sandstone which he identified with an altar (*altare*). In the vicinity he recovered a throne sculpted from a sandstone block which he claimed was placed on the altar against the back wall of the *naos* (Pesce 1966b: 160). The presence of a Punic inscription on an ashlar block at the entrance to the temple, together with another on a block built into a wall in a different part of the complex, has led scholars to refer to this building as the 'Temple of the inscriptions' (*Tempio delle iscrizioni*); it is also known, however, as 'Temple K' (*Tempietto K*) (Barreca 1984a: 162; Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 36).

Ferruccio Barreca made a number of references to this building in his studies on Punic religious sites in Sardinia, publishing also a plan of the area (1984: 162, fig. 87; 1986: figs. 63-64; 1987b: 25) (**FIGURE 109a**). He claimed that this was a typical Semitic cult room with a bench (*bancone*) against the back wall, recalling a similar installation in the temple he uncovered at Capo San Marco in Tharros itself (**3.8.12**).

He noted, however, that its westwards orientation was not normal, dictated undoubtedly by the terrain. Barreca noted that the whole complex dated to Roman times but suggested a date not before the fifth century BC for the temple.

A study of this edifice was conducted by Enrico Acquaro as part of the interdisciplinary archaeological mission to Tharros (1983: 625-626, figs 2-4). A reconstruction in elevation of the building was drawn up by Filippo Codini (Acquaro 1988c: 221) (**FIGURE 109b**). Acquaro suggested that this temple found the closest parallels in Italy, with a date in the second century BC (1983: 628 n. 12).

Most Italian scholars are in agreement about the religious nature of this site; none, however, present a strong case to justify seeing a temple here, and most references to the site vary in detail and content. For instance, Tore (1989b: 44) defends the "Punic" and sacred character of the site by recalling that the orientation of the temple is with the corners (*con gli angoli a nord*); this is not exact and the real orientation is in fact W-E (Acquaro 1983: fig. 2). More problematic is the dating of the structures which remains, as Acquaro himself claims (1983: 628) 'hypothetical'. In view of what was discussed in CHAPTER II, and taking the site in isolation, it is difficult to justify calling the building under consideration a temple: the layout of the building - a seemingly open, small room with a bench opposite the entrance - defies a utilitarian function; unfortunately, however, we have no idea what artefacts were uncovered during the excavation and therefore we have no evidence whatsoever to suggest redundancy and propose some dating parameters; also, although the inscriptions are of a religious or votive nature (Uberti 1978: 75-76; Acquaro & Mezzolani 1996: 36-38), they belong to a secondary context and we have no information about their original collocation before being incorporated into new walls.

An important datum which has been overlooked by all except Tore (1989b: 68-69 n. 111-112) is the stone throne said to have been found near the first flight of stairs, and now preserved (according to Tore) in the stores of the Museum at Cagliari. Unfortunately, the throne has remained unpublished. Tore suggested that this throne could belong to the type of "empty thrones" known in the Levant.

In view of what has been discussed thus far, it is impossible to consider this site as a religious building.

3.8.16 Temple with a Semitic Plan (*Tempio a Pianta Semitica*), Tharros

Site visit: 20 April 1997

Reported: Pesce 1966a: 149-150

Published: —

Description and discussion. Adjoining the Temple of Doric half-columns to the SW, the Pesce excavations at Tharros uncovered a square open area which was identified by the excavator with a 'temple of semitic plan', following the typology proposed by A. Lézine (Pesce 1966a: 149-150; Lézine 1959: 258) (**FIGURES 102, 103, 110**). The area, measuring approximately 15 by 15 m., was carved into the rocky flank of the hill, leaving an entrance from the SE.[1] A portico, built according to Pesce in Roman Imperial times, seems to have surrounded a central open-area incorporating a well. Pesce insisted that the traces visible on the NW back wall, on its median axis, belonged to a tabernacle (*tabernacolo*). He suggested that others would have existed on the other two walls, so that the temple would have been the house of a main deity accompanied by two minor ones. About two hundred intact Punic vases were recovered from the well, suggesting to Pesce that this was a 'sacred well with votive objects' (Pesce 1966a: 143).

The religious nature of this area has found acceptance in the Italian literature dealing with Phoenician and Punic Tharros. Barreca included it in his list of sacred areas at Tharros (1984a: 162-163; 1986: 286; 1987: 25), on the basis of the well and the traces of the shrine on the back wall, despite lamenting the fact that 'movable finds which might have some bearing on its function are missing' (1987: 25). Acquaro & Finzi (1986: 48-49) mention it in a respectable guide to Tharros, while Tore (1989b: 44) says that the area could have had Punic antecedents but does not specify of what nature. Recently, Acquaro & Mezzolani (1996: 38) have remarked on the difficulty in understanding the site, pointing out that the mosaic pavement dates the present layout of the site to the third century AD.

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[1] None of the sources I had access to gives the dimensions of the area. These have been read off the plan given in Barreca 1984a: 163, fig. 88.

On the basis of what has been reported about this site in Tharros, it is difficult to find justification in describing the remains as a sanctuary or temple. As Barreca pointed out, we have no information about the finds which must have been excavated in this area. With regards to the collection of complete vases recovered from the well, these have not been published, so we do not know whether the pots were of any particular form or type. It is true that two hundred complete pots could be tentatively classified as a ritual cache on the basis of the completeness of the artefacts, but the information available is too meagre to allow any plausible conclusions. The arguments put forward by Pesce and others are not conclusive in themselves. As for the plan of the area concording with Lézine's typology for 'sanctuaires à plan dit "sémitique"' (1959: 258), this has to wait until reference is made to other Phoenician and Punic sites in the Mediterranean (CHAPTER IV).

3.8.17 Temple of the Egyptianising Cornice blocks (*Tempio delle Gole Egizie*), Tharros

Site visit: 11 April 1995, 20 April 1997

Reported: Tore 1973

Published: unexcavated

Description and discussion. A note of this alleged 'temple' was given by Giovanni Tore (1973) who says that, 'the temple with Egyptian cavetto cornice blocks' was uncovered during excavations conducted in 1969 by F. Barreca on the southern flanks of Su Murru Mannu hill at Tharros (1972: 133) (**FIGURES 102, 103**). Tore describes what he meant by 'temple' when he says that, 'only a great number of architectural elements including Egyptian cavetto cornice blocks and column bases, clearly belonging to a religious building, were recovered: *the site still had to be excavated*'.[1] Acquaro & Mezzolani include the remains in their map of Tharros (1996: 35 fig. 3) and point out that the plan of the alleged 'temple' was uncovered by Barreca but that no excavation took place. Barreca does in fact refer to these remains, but they are not included as forms of religious architecture of any kind (1984a, 1986, 1987).

While the type of blocks unearthed could be related to a religious building (although this will have to be demonstrated), they remain a pile of stone blocks apparently found together, but with *no* contextual indication of their use. The finds do not fulfill any of the criteria set out in CHAPTER II.

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[1] Emphasis is mine. '[...] (si tratta, per ora, di un'area che ha restituito un gran numero di elementi architettonici, come cornice "a gola egizia" e basi di colonne, chiaramente pertinenti ad un edificio sacro: il sito, però, è ancora da scavare).' (Tore 1973: 133). Elsewhere Tore (1989b: 44 n. 105) points out that the existence of a temple here is conjectural and based only on the retrieval of the blocks.

3.9.1 Gorham's Cave, Gibraltar

Site visit: Gibraltar seen from coastal motorway Malaga - Cadíz on 1 October 1995

Reported: Waechter 1951

Published: Culican 1972

Description. Gorham's cave is one of seven caves situated on the SE side of the Rock of Gibraltar (**FIGURE 111**). It is long and narrow with an arched double entrance and access to it is either by boat or by climbing down ladders from the nearest modern road. Its speleological interest was noted by Major A. Gorham who visited the cave and its fissures in 1907 and gave it his name. Archaeological deposits noted by members of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers sparked off initial excavations in the upper levels. It was only later that full scale excavations directed by J. Waechter at the request of the Governor of Gibraltar commenced. The preliminary report for the excavations conducted in 1948 and 1950 was published in 1951 (Waechter 1951). The excavations included a sounding nearly 5 m deep which when extended further into the cave exposed a uniform stratigraphy for the entire length of the cave. Ten layers were identified and recorded in a section drawing (**FIGURES 112, 113**). Only the highest stratum (Layer A) dated to historical times; the rest was of Upper Palaeolithic and earlier date, thus attracting more scholarly attention and research (Zeuner 1953). Layer A at 17.40-17.30 m above sea-level was described as follows:

> 'A mixture of sand and bat guano, it is fairly compact but not cemented; it is only 4 cm. in the centre of the cave but deepens to 24 cm. towards the walls. It contained a large quantity of pottery, scarabs and glass, as well as bones and marine shells, mostly *Patella*. There were traces of charcoal throughout, but no clearly defined hearths.' (Waechter 1951: 85)

Layer A sealed a thin stalagmite floor which contained no archaeological material except for one piece of hand-made pottery. Waechter concluded that the 'majority' of the artefacts discovered in Layer A dated from Punic times. We are told that 'the whole of this material' had been handed over to Dr D. B. Harden of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, 'to be published in a separate paper' (Waechter 1951: 87).

It seems that Donald Harden never published the Punic material from Gorham's Cave. Instead, a meticulous study was undertaken by William Culican before some of the objects were returned to the Gibraltar museum (Culican 1972). The rest of the objects, mostly pottery, are on show in the British Museum and a catalogue of them was published by R. Barnett (1963-1964). Culican's study concentrated mainly on the scarabs dating them to the sixth-seventh centuries BC but 'none later than 550 BC', while the Phoenician seals were dated to the sixth and fifth centuries BC. The Punic pottery studied consisted of wheel-made shallow bowls and dishes. Amongst the places from which parallels were drawn to study the pottery, Culican included the Phoenician sites of Lixus, Mogador, Rachgoun and Carthage. Handmade pottery was also reported with parallels in Ampurias. The material included also two fragments of terracotta figures of a refined pale orange clay known in Ibiza. One of the terracottas represents a female head, 'probably part of a funerary mask or protome' (Culican 1972: 130). Fragments of small glass amphoriskoi and beads of thick dark opaque glass were also studied, together with fish-hooks and two La Tène I type bronze brooches.

Discussion. According to Culican the nature of the deposit would explain the function of the cave at Gibraltar: 'Bearing in mind that the deposit does not appear to belong to "occupation" or to burials, a religious explanation is the most likely. Offerings to the genius loci, as in the Cueva de Es Cuyram in Ibiza, would account for the terracottas, seals, trinkets and food dishes.' (Culican 1972: 132); and his conclusions have been accepted by many (e.g. Rouillard 1992: 190). However, Culican overlooked the exact location of the cave when more recently he spoke of 'Gorham's Cave *high* in the Rock of Gibraltar [...]' (1991: 526; emphasis added). Others, on the other hand, have considered the strategic location of the cave right at the base of the Rock of Gibraltar and a few metres away from the seashore, guarding the entrance to an obligatory route towards Cadiz (Aubet 1988: 242), and induced them to label the site a 'mariner's chapel' (Belen & Pérez 1994[1]; Vidal Gonzáles

[1] Belen, M., and Pérez, I. Gorham's Cave: un santuario marinero en el estrecho, *Gibraltar during the Quaternary*. Gibraltar. 1994. This reference could not be traced.

1996) thereby defending its religious nature. As for the cult practiced in the cave, Culican proposed that it was connected with Hercules given the position of the grotto at the Straits associated with the god, while Aubet claims (1988: 242), without giving any reasons, that it was consecrated to Tanit (also Amucano 1992: 548 n. 19).

The find of so many scarabs and pottery is certainly out of the ordinary for this relatively inaccessible site. Some of the objects (scarabs and amulets) are certainly accounted items of value and taken together it is possible to argue that they did not fulfill any ordinary utilitarian purpose. Unfortunately, however, we have hardly any contextual information that would allow us to make a spatial study of the artefacts within the cave and to discern any particular patterns. It is also possible that the artifacts found their way here through action which had nothing to do with religious ritual, perhaps by a merchant or sailor who sought refuge in the cave, although this is unlikely. Taking the site in isolation, however, the case for a religious site at Gorham's cave is a weak one.

3.10 Spain: The Balearics

3.10.1 Cueva de Es Cuieram[1]

Site visit: —

Reported: Román 1913: 69-87; Vives 1917: 27-28, fig. 25.

Published: Aubet 1982

Description. In July and August 1907, following news that pottery, bones and coins had been discovered in a cave near San Vicente, explorations were conducted in the Cueva de Es Cuieram by the Sociedad Arqueológica Ebusitana led by Juan Román and his son Carlos Román Ferrer. A. Pérez Cabrero (who had worked on Illa Plana), A. Vives y Escudero and P. Marí participated in the excavations. Inside the cave the team unearthed six hundred terracotta statuettes and about a thousand heads belonging to similar statuettes, a small ivory lion, pottery, ashes and burnt bones.[2] The work undertaken was fully reported in 1913 (Román 1913: 69-87) preceded only by a preliminary note two years earlier (Pérez Cabrero 1911: 20-23). The spectacular finds were quickly interpreted as votive offerings to Astarte-Aphrodite (Pérez Cabrero) or as representations of the priestesses of Tanit (Román), and the cave was a religious site.

The cave is situated in a mountainous region which forms a headland at Punta Grossa at San Vincente on the NE coast of the island. It is located in an isolated spot at a height of 150 m. above sea level, and has views of the sea and the nearby bay of San Vicente, about 1.5 km. away (**FIGURE 114**).[3]

Further explorations were conducted in the cave in the following years: in 1909 A.Vives reported the discovery of hand-made pottery thought to be prehistoric,

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[1] A wide range of spellings for Cueva de Es Cuieram is found in the literature (including Cuyram and Cuyeram). The preferred spelling used here is that employed by two Spanish scholars in two recent research aids on the Phoenicians: Aubet 1992: 157-158 and Gómez Bellard 1995: 763.

[2] The statuettes are displayed and stored in a number of museums (see Aubet 1982: 12-13).

and published the first plan of the cave (Vives 1917: 27-28, fig. 25); in 1916 A. Pérez Cabrero conducted some excavations but never published the results; in 1923 a farmer reported the discovery of a bronze plaque inscribed on either side with Punic characters.[4] This period of exploration was followed by a time when the cave seems to have been the subject of clandestine excavations. Between 1965-1968, new excavations took place inside the cave, led by E. de Fortuny (Baron de Esponellá) and M. J. Almagro Gorbea. In the first year, the work involved sieving the spoil accumulated during earlier campaigns. A catalogue of the objects retrieved was published (Almagro Gorbea & de Fortuny 1969-1970). The most recent investigations were undertaken by J. Ramón in 1981 to clear all the spoil left during previous excavation campaigns, and to produce a plan of the cave to replace an earlier, innacurate sketch by Planells Ferrer (1970: 11; reproduced in Delcor 1978: 28) (Ramón 1982; 1985) (**FIGURES 115, 116**). Description and classification of the statutettes has been the subject of a number of studies (Almagro Gorbea 1980; Aubet 1982; Mañá 1946), together with analyses of the inscriptions on the plaque (Delcor 1978; Ferron 1969; Littmann 1932; Lipinski 1983; Solá Solé 1951-1952).

In his analysis of the cave, Ramón (1985: 125-130) divided the space within the cave into three areas or 'Halls'. Hall I [4] was artificial, rectangular and cut into the rock. It included a rock-cut cistern [1] (4.30 by 1.32-1.14 m.) flanked to the right by what appears to have been steps [2]. Hall I is today taken up by a retaining wall [5a] and spoil from past excavations [30]. Hall II is a natural cave but the rock ceiling has collapsed over most of the area, presumably – according to Ramón – after Punic times. Compartments 14-18 to the SE survived intact with a low headroom (less than 1.50 m.), together with compartments 10 and 13 to the NW and N respectively. The headroom in the former is less than 1 m. while in 13 it reaches 1.50 m. Access to Hall II must have been through the space between three stalagmites (6a-6c and 6b). Rocks from the roof collapse are located over most of the area, sealing what appear to be intact archaeological deposits. The only access to the cave in 1907 was 8, which

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[3] The exact location of the cave is given differently in various sources. Ramón (1985: 125) points out that the height above sea level of the cave is 150 m.; the mountain where the cave is situated reaches a height of 200 m.

seems not to have been altered by dynamite explosions undertaken in later times Entrance to Hall III is through a small space between stalagmites 6i and 6j but the sharp drop into compartment 23 suggests that the entrance was stepped. Hall III is oval in plan with a separate compartment [25] to the SE. Access to the N is blocked by a massive boulder [27], undoubtedly part of an ancient roof collapse, which covers in part another compartment [28]. Ramón argues that the collapse took place much earlier than Punic times because stalagmite 6i has formed over the boulder. Ample headroom is found in 23 and reaches almost 5 m. in one point.

Aubet (1982; also 1968) has made a study of the artefacts recovered from the cave, dividing them into eight classes: bell-shaped statuettes; enthroned figures; flat figurines; incense burners; miscellaneous terracottas; pottery; metal and ivory objects; baetyls and altars.

The commonest artifact was the bell-shaped statuette (**PLATE 21c, d**). These are hollow and elliptical in section, made from a two-piece mould. They represent a bust of a female wearing a cylindrical headdress or *kalathos*, with the hair falling on either side of the face. Two wings act like a cloak to cover the body, leaving a triangular space for decorations on the chest. These include the lotus flower, the lunar crescent, the solar disk and the caduceus. The height varies between 9 and 18 cm. and the base between 5 and 10 cm. The clay used is grey or ochre but most are blackened by the action of fire. Some show traces of colour: red for the face, the headdress and the wing, and blue for the veces. The face of a few seems to have been covered with gold leaf. Aubet (1982: 15-27) has listed 26 sub-types in this class. She identifies the figure with Tanit, arguing that the wings are an attribute of the Phoenician and Punic goddess (1982: 40; 1986).

The enthroned figures, of which four are known, are of poor workmanship, made from a two-piece mould (**PLATE 21b**). They represent a cylindrical-shaped figure wearing a headdress and a plain, undecorated cloak which conceals the hands

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[4] Delcor (1978: 31) gives the date of retrieval as '1923 or 1924'. The bronze plaque was bequeathed to the Museo Arqueológico de Alicante in 1929.

and feet. The figure rests inside a high-backed throne with arm rests. Aubet points out that seated goddesses of this type are common in Greek Sicily (1982: 27).

The flat figurines depict what is thought to be a female figure, either full- or half-length, wearing a veil and sometimes a headdress, and holding various attributes including a dove, a pig, a pomegranate, and a torch. Aubet has divided this class in seven sub-types and sought their origin in Sicilian Greek models of the mid-sixth century. She identifies the female figure with Demeter on the basis of the attributes mentioned (Aubet 1982: 27-30).

Eight incense-holders in the shape of a female head were recovered from the cave. They depict a female bust with the hair parted in the middle of the forehead, covered with a headdress of leaves and fruit. A *kalathos* is found on the head. It has holes where the incense in placed. Below the neck, the dress is held together by a circular fibula or brooch. Aubet has identified two sub-types in this class, and traces their origin in Greek Sicily where similar incense burners were used in the cult of the goddess Demeter (1982: 30-32).

Unfortunately, most of the ceramics recovered from Es Cuieram in the first excavations have been lost, and few have been illustrated in the published accounts. The investigations financed by Baron de Esponellá unearthed pottery which spans the fourth century BC-third century AD, but the commonest pieces fell in the period third-second century BC. Other finds included fragments of iron knives, Punic coins minted in Ebusus (Ibiza) and Roman coins of the third century AD. A gold medallion was also retreived in 1968. It depicts a serpent and a bearded figure, and has been dated to the fourth/third centuries BC (Almagro Gorbea & de Fortuny 1969-1970).

Delcor (1978) has made an important analysis of the inscriptions on the bronze plaque, taking into account earlier interpretations and offering new insights based on a close study of the original preserved at the museum of Alicante. The plaque is small and measures 9.08 by 4.64 by 0.028 cm., and is inscribed with Punic characters on

either side.[5] The two inscriptions date to a different period as is immediately apparent from the letter forms. It was thought that the earlier inscription, on the reverse of the plaque, speaks of the dedication of a sanctuary (*mqḍ[š]*) to the Phoenician god Resheph-Melqart.[6] Recently, however, Lipinski (1983) has noted that the reading of Resheph-Melqart is erroneous and that we should read 'Eresh, builder of the city' (*'rš bny qrt*) (also Bonnet 1988: 237). The later inscription, on the obverse, is a dedication to the Phoenician goddess Tanit 'of Good Fortune' (*lrbbtn ltnt 'drt whgd*) and commemorates the making of a statue (*hgbl*) by a priest who also made the statue and paid for the costs.[7] The obverse is perforated by three holes, done after the letters had been inscribed. They were originally meant for rivets or nails, two on the right at the corners, one on the left in the middle. The right hand side of the obverse is broken, and hence the last letter of each word in the earlier inscription is missing. The inscriptions have been dated on palaeographic grounds to the fifth-fourth centuries BC (Delcor 1978: 37, 49 and references therein) and to second century BC (Aubet 1982: 34; *ICO*: 143-145) respectively. The cave seems to have been frequented well into Roman times, about the second century AD on account of pottery lifted by Almagro Gorbea and de Fortuny (1969-1970: 34).

Scholars are agreed on the religious function of the cave: the statuettes uncovered in the explorations early this century are ex-votos to the goddess Tanit mentioned in the later inscription on the bronze plaque (see Lipinski 1995a: 424-425). Aubet (1982: 13-14) states that such statuettes were deposited in sanctuaries by worshippers to thank the divinity for intercession. The rite must have involved the sacrifice of animals because the statuettes were found in a deposit of ash and burnt bones. Following Román (1913: 85), she refers to stones of a conical shape, about 0.15 m high, as baetyls and small altars, and remarks that these are usually found in Phoenician religious sites, citing the work of G. Conteneau to back up her claim

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[5] The measurements given in Aubet (1982: 33-4) are different: 9.2 by 4.6 cm.

[6] The *š* of *mqdš* has been supplied by Delcor and other epigraphists because the inscription is damaged. Solá-Solé (1951-52) and Puech (1986: 339) like Delcor read 'sanctuary' here, whereas Ferron (1969) reads 'statue'.

[7] Delcor (1978) interprets *hgbl* as 'statue'. Ferron (1969) and others have read the word as *hgzl* 'wall', but Delcor insists that epigraphists had used copies of the inscription, and that on close inspection of the original the third letter reads as *beth* and not *zayin*. An alternative meaning of *hgbl* is 'territory,

(Aubet 1982: 34-35). Almagro Gorbea (1980: 36; Almagro Gorbea & de Fortuny 1969-1970: 8) thought that the sacred cave must have been secret and accessible only to certain worshippers. The burnt bones and ashes suggested to Almagro Gorbea that a funerary rite took place here, an interpretation first proposed by Carlos Román. Delcor (1978: 37, 49-51) concords with Aubet about a cult to Tanit taking place in the cave on the basis of the terracottas unearthed and the reference to the goddess in the inscription. He points out that there is no concrete evidence suggestive of a cult to Resheph-Melqart in the cave (a remark which is now obsolete if Lipinski's re-reading is adopted). He makes the important remark that the inscription mentioning this Phoenician god (or gods) on the reverse of the plaque could have been done elsewhere, and that the plaque was only brought to Es Cuieram at a later stage when the second inscription was made (also Bonnet 1988: 238). From the analysis (1978: 52) of a few bones collected during a visit to the cave, Delcor concludes that the sacrifices to Tanit must have been of small goats; the sample he collected did not include human bone.

Discussion. One of the criteria set out in CHAPTER II is satisfied at Es Cuieram. Here we have the repetition (at least 600) of one particular class of object in the archaeological record: the statuettes. What we do not have is the findspot of the statuettes within the cave or any information about the condition of retrieval, a fact already lamented by Delcor (1978: 30; also Almagro Gorbea & de Fortuny 1969-1970: 35) who refers to Carlo Román's thrill and excitement at discovering the terracottas.[8] The only information we have about the archaeological context is that the statuettes were found mixed in a deposit of ash and burnt bones (Aubet 1982: 10, 13), a remark which suggests that we are dealing with a secondary deposition. It is tempting to associate this deposit with the pits [20 and 22] in the floor of the cave but we cannot corroborate this; indeed we have no clear answer about the context.

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limit, frontier' but Delcor (1978: 40) remarks that, 'Ni le sens de frontière ni celui de territoire ne conviennent évidemment à l'inscription d'Ibiza'.

[8] Román (1913: 71).

Taking the site of Es Cuieram in isolation, the case for religious ritual taking place in the cave can be made. Although the statuettes are not lacking in attributes which are of symbolic significance (the lunar crescent, the solar disk and the caduceus), and form part of Phoenician and Punic sacred iconography known from other sites (CHAPTER IV), they lack any significant posture or gesture indicative of adoration or some other expressive action. In a way, this would rule out the possibility that the statuettes are votaries and instead be commensurate with Aubet's claim that they represent the divinity (Tanit) herself. The force of the argument in favour of a ritual interpretation for the site would be the second inscription which refers to the dedication of a statue to the goddess Tanit. But the conditions of retrieval are not clear.

3.10.2 Sanctuary at Illa Plana (Santuario de Illa Plana)

Site visit: Not possible; site is no longer visible

Reported: Pérez Cabrero 1911

Published: Hachuel & Marí 1988

Description and discussion. Explorations conducted on Illa Plana (literally, 'flat island') between 1907-1909 by members of the newly founded Sociedad Arqueológica Ebusitana (1903) directed by A. Pérez Cabrero, uncovered remains which led the excavator to conclude that Illa Plana was the site of an open-air temple where sacrifices were undertaken (Pérez Cabrero 1911). Further work was carried out on the island in 1953 by José Mª Mañá de Angulo, then Director of the Ibiza Museum, and Miriam Astruc, which helped to clarify some of the previous work (**FIGURE 117**).

Pérez Cabrero divided the area he explored into several sectors: α, β, δ, γ, λ, and π (1911: 24) (**FIGURE 118**). In sector α large remains of the shell *murex trunculus* were found. Pérez Cabrero also mentions the discovery of Phoenician and Greek ceramics together with Punic coins in this area but nothing else is known. It has been suggested that this sector could have been an industrial site where purple cloth was dyed (Hachuel & Marí 1988: 24; Ramón 1985: 85). In sector δ, Pérez Cabrero uncovered a well which contained no significant objects. Three rectangular holes or depressions (*agujeros*) were also uncovered but their function is unknown (Hachuel & Marí 1988: 24-25). The most interesting discoveries were made in sector γ and sector λ where Pérez Cabrero noted fragments of ostrich eggs and large stones, terracotta figurines, fish hooks, Phoenician coins, fibulae, etc, on the surface of the field. In sector γ he uncovered a 30-metre deep well or pit (photographed by C. Román (1913: 45-65) in Hachuel & Marí 1988: plate 1.2), from which he lifted 33 terracotta statuettes, undoubtedly votive offerings. In the adjacent sector λ, which is situated in the centre of the island, Pérez Cabrero uncovered a cistern or tank (*aljibe*) in which were 52 human skeletons 'de época remota'. A series of round pits or depressions were also uncovered. The excavator also speaks of the discovery of the foundations of an 'important building' in this area (Hachuel & Marí 1988: 25-26). Explorations in

sector π, about 80 m away from the pit containing the statuettes, Pérez Cabrero uncovered remains which he interperted as 'un templo al aire libre dispuesto para hacer sacrificios' (the map is noted 'templo'). Investigations by Mañá and Astruc, however, revealed that what was interpreted as a temple were in fact remains of a Roman water cistern (measuring 8.40 by 2.10 m) with the bases of two columns inside it (Mañá 1955: 196).

Scholars (Pericot Garcia 1972: 117; Almagro Gorbea 1980: 33; Hachuel & Marí 1988, 1991: 61; Ramón 1985: 85; *cf.* Taradell 1974: 26-27) agree that the most important datum from the explorations conducted on the island was the discovery of the figurines, and the statuettes in the pit.[1] This is indicative, they argue, of the existence of a temple: the statuettes are votive offerings and the pits are *bothroi* or repositories of objects used in religious ritual. Only Lancel (1995a: 82) differs, preferring to identify the site with a tophet on the basis that the campaniform statuettes were recovered from similar contexts in Sardinia, Sicily and Carthage. Hachuel & Marí (1988) have made a detailed study of the remains lamenting the fact that previous work had only concentrated on the terracottas without taking into consideration the archaeological context (1988: 20-21; 1991: 59). By reviewing the excavation notes of Peréz Cabrero, they hypothesize that sectors lambda, gamma and delta would have been the *temenos* of the sanctuary. In their study they classify the statuary into two types: mould-made figurines and wheel-made statuettes. The first group is dated to about 600-550 BC. For the second group, they argue that there must have been different phases of use: end of the sixth century to the beginning of the fifth for the bell-shaped figurines; mid-fifth century for the cylindrical statuettes and those with a lamp; second half of the fifth century for the plain ovoid terracottas. They argue that the second group is so homogenous that it is difficult to think that they do not belong exclusively to Illa Plana. They argue that a similar 'standardization' (*estandarización*) is known for statuettes associated with other Punic sanctuaries elsewhere, citing the Cueva de Es Cuieram as the closest parallel. This homogeneity, they argue, coupled with the existence of the *bothros*, would indicate the existence of

[1] These are dispersed in four different museums: Museo Arqueológico de Ibiza, Museo Arqueológico de Barcelona, Museo del Cau Ferrat (Sitges, Barcelona), Museo del Santuario de Llunch (Mallorca).

a Punic sanctuary on the island (Hachuel & Marí 1991: 62). They suggest (1991: 64) that the sanctuary must have been abandoned before the beginning of the fourth century BC.

At Illa Plana we have the repeated occurrence of specific elements in the archaeological record (the figurines and statuettes) and a case for redundancy can certainly be made. But we do not know enough about the context of the finds that would allow us a reconstruction of the processes by which the figurines and the statuettes ended in the pit. The figurines and statuettes (between 16.5 - 24 cm.) are all portable. It is difficult to see what other use the '*bothros*' would have had: its dimensions (9 m. deep, 1 m. diameter) almost reach down to sea level, so it is unlikely that it could have served as a well. A survey of the coroplastic art from Illa Plana reveals the local, popular character of the figures: the head on some of the examples[2] is rendered in an expressive design which makes it look zoomorphic, with deep oval sockets for the eyes and a nose that extends from the cranium to meet the chin; the arms extend downwards against an ovoid body and the hands hold the penis (**PLATE 22**); a necklace with pendants is attached to the neck; on other examples, the head is rendered more realistically and the mouth is now shown, but the necklace takes the shape of a ring firmly set round the neck.[3] Another group, also made on a wheel is bell-shaped or campaniform: the heads have protruding ears and a strong hooked nose with a pointed chin; both males and females are represented.[4] The position of the arms, which again are attached to the body in barbotine, are held up to the chest, in a position which archaeologists have interpreted as an attitude of prayer or gesture of adoration (Ferron & Aubet 1974); the terracottas would therefore represent the images of worshippers. A third group shows similar cylindrical figures carrying spouted lamps above their hands, outstretched arms, and shoulders; red-coloured bands embellish the head and the body, on which they cross over, probably representing a robe.[5]

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[2] Hachuel & Marí 1988: plates 17-19.
[3] Hachuel & Marí 1988: plate 20.
[4] Hachuel & Marí 1988: Class IA, plates 7-13.
[5] Hachuel & Marí 1988: Class II, plates 14-15.

Although the form of these terracottas would best be explained by a religious function, we cannot be certain that the pit served as a deliberate facility for the location of these special items. Without reference to other sites it is very difficult to establish that the context at Illa Plana is a religious one.

3.11.1 Carton Chapel, Carthage

Site visit: Site is no longer visible

Reported: —

Published: Carton 1929; Ferchiou 1987

Description and discussion. In 1915, during works on the electric tram at the locality known as Salammbo, about 500 m. west of the tophet in Carthage (**FIGURE 119**), fragments of terracotta statuettes were discovered. Excavations undertaken intermittently by Louis Carton between May and December 1916 uncovered a Roman necropolis, beneath which were remains of a rectangular room identified with a Punic sanctuary. An account of the work undertaken was published posthumously but, unfortunately, no plans were included (Carton 1929). A theoretical reconstruction of the plan of the sanctuary based on Carton's account has been attempted (Fantar 1986: fig. 2; Ferichou 1987: 15-26, figs 1-6, plates 4-5) (**FIGURE 120**).

The building consisted of a rectangular room or *cella*, measuring 5.9 by 5.1 m., with a bent-entry layout (Carton 1929: 2-7). The major axis of the room is oriented NE-SW as reconstructed from Carton's account.[1] The walls were built of a mixture of mudbrick and limestone fragments, and were nowhere higher than 0.60 m. A stuccoed plinth of side 0.40 m. was built against the rear, NW wall of the *cella*. The retrieval of architectural fragments in this area (1929: 5) had, years later, suggested to the chief architect of historic monuments in Tunis Alexandre Lézine (1959: 251) that the plinth was surmounted by a canopy supported by fluted Ionic half-columns resting *in antis* on walls of stuccoed clay. Lézine thought that the canopy was similar to the architectural motif prevalent on Punic stelae from tophet precincts which consist of two columns supporting an entablature. A bench, 0.30 m. wide, surrounded the NW and SE walls.

Carton noted that the room had two building phases: on removing the floor of hard cement tiles from the centre of the room, he uncovered another floor 0.45 m.

[1] Fantar (1986: fig. 2) gives a N-S orientation, but this is not the case.

below the first (1929: 3-4). The earlier floor, limited to the extent of the room and untraced outside, was composed of terracotta and white limestone tiles. But it was from the later floor level that the corpus of terracotta statuary and pottery was lifted. From the inner half of the room, Carton recovered an 'ensemble votif' consisting of terracotta incense burners in the shape of female heads (*kernophoroi*) and two pottery lamps surmounted on vertical stands (1929: 10-12, 25, 55, plate 5.9); Carton also remarked that some of the incense burners were recovered attached to fragments of the stuccoed consoles on which they rested (1929: 5). Towards the centre of the room Carton found two female heads crowned with a high tiara, a terracotta lion, a terracotta figurine of Silene, and two terracotta busts of warriors (1929: 7, 8). From the area immediately opposite the doorway stood a big terracotta mask of a grimacing face (0.45 m. high) and a flat Gorgon's head (0.45 m. high) in terracotta (1929: 7, 13, plate 1.1). Two other terracottas are included in the catalogue (1929: 16-17, plates 1.2, 5.10): they consist of two personages seated on richly decorated thrones; one of them rests her feet on a lion and is attended by a person on either side; the other rests her feet on a dias on which is represented a sphinx above a decoration of palmettes, while the uprights of the throne are decorated with representations of Victories. One-tenth of all the fragments of statuary recovered could be reconstructed, but the findspot of the majority is not provided (1929: 7-25). Carton, however, noted that the position of the reconstructable finds within the room strongly suggested that the place was abandoned suddenly, probably by the military activities which engulfed Carthage in 146 BC. He dated the corpus of statuary to the fourth or third centuries BC on account of stylistic similarities with Punic terracottas found in funerary contexts.

Carton concluded that the room which must have formed part of a larger complex was a Punic sanctuary (1929: 27-28). He remarked that the presence of so many terracotta statues inside a room together with the retrieval of two moulds could suggest that this place was in fact a potter's store; he argued, however, that the statuary had clear traces of use and that a simple utilitarian designation for the building would hardly explain its rich decoration. He also noted that the building could not be a mausoleum due to the complete lack of cinerary urns. It was not

altogether clear who was the divinity or divinities worshipped inside the sanctuary, but Carton suggested that it included the Punic Baal and Tanit-Caelestis.

The case presented by Carton that this small room was a religious building is strong, and one which scholars have been inclined to accept (Fantar 1986: 33-35; Lancel 1995a: 213). The monument, however, is not well known as is apparent from the lack of references to it in research aids, while some authors simply acknowedge its existence without further elaboration (Lipinski 1995a: 430). This is indeed a pity for the initiatives of Louis Carton, one of the pioneers of fieldwork at Carthage, remain largely unrecognised. In his report Carton follows the process of inference explained in CHAPTER II to conclude that the building uncovered was a sanctuary. His careful observations regarding the position and location of the statuary allowed him to conclude that some of the objects had fallen from the consoles; as such, the collection of statuary constituted a primary deposit, abandoned suddenly due to an external cause which Carton linked with the Roman attack on Carthage. Only after eliminating the possibility that the room could be a potter's store was the religious explanation proposed. One or two remarks should, however, be added. The first regards chronology: while the *terminus ante quem* suggested by Carton has not been debated, the building of the sanctuary has been put down to the end of the third century BC by Ferchiou, purely on stylistic grounds. Secondly, the evidence which can be put forward for routine domestic activity does not exist: no pottery other than the incense burners and spouted lamps are reported. These specific ceramic types, which are all containers for fuel, would strengthen the suggestion that we are indeed dealing with a context which is religious.

If this building is considered in isolation, however, recognising images of deities or of human offerings to that deity is not an easy task. Nothing in particular marks the statuettes of a figure with a bowl on her head as a cult image: if anything their position on consoles carrying not a basket (*kernos*) but an incense-burning bowl (Lancel 1995a: 347), would suggest that they were meant to be subordinate to an image focally placed at the NE end of the room. Which of the statues recovered constituted the image of the divine is difficult to ascertain: gesture is not a helpful

criterion in this context because most of the anthropomorphic imagery of a relatively large scale includes only busts, while the "warrior" statues have lost their arms and head. The statue of a boy with a duck would suggest a votary bringing along a gift to a divinity. Unfortunately, the fragments of large terracotta statues inscribed with Punic letters remain poorly published and translations are not available (Carton 1929: 25, plate 2.3). All the statuary appears to have been multi-coloured, perhaps to attract attention and stick-out in the darkness of the room. Of particular interest, however, remain the terracotta mask and the gorgon's head: they were found near the wall opposite the doorway. It is plausible to suggest that they had fallen from the wall where presumably they had been suspended. On entering the small room, the large grimacing face painted bright red with eyes and mouth wide open, and the accompanying brightly coloured head, would have been prominently placed to attract attention. The snakes are attributes that occur both on the mask and the head suggesting that we are dealing with mythical or fantastic beings that can dominate these creatures. Without reference to other sites or to an iconography already understood it is difficult to distinguish between the figures and to define their precise nature.

3.11.2 Sidi-bou-Saïd, Tunisia

Site visit: Not possible; site was destroyed

Reported: —

Published: Merlin 1919

Description and Discussion. The discovery of a small sanctuary on the southern slopes of Sidi-bou-Saïd in the northern district of Carthage was reported in 1917 by Jules Baudin. A plan of the edifice was published a few years later by A. Merlin (1919: 178-180, fig. 1) together with a catalogue of terracotta statuettes and reliefs retrieved from within. The rectangular edifice, which was located about fifty metres from the cliff's edge overlooking the Gulf of Carthage, measured 4 by 1.70 m. overall; the orientation of the building is not known (**FIGURES 119, 121**).[1] It was built of bricks set in mortar and covered with a layer of fine plaster; the bedrock had been levelled to build the edifice. The plan of the building or aedicule is divided into three units of space along a longitudinal axis: a vestibule (1.70 by 1.70 m.) lined with benches and paved with a mosaic led into a second (0.95 m. deep) and a third room (0.50 m. deep); a pair of engaged pillars separate the two inner rooms. Just before the pillars, towards the middle of the second room was a table composed of a slab, which had slid from the uprights on which it rested. These uprights were 0.65 m. high and were stuccoed at the base in the shape of a lion's claw. Merlin held that this was was a table for offerings. Opposite the entrance, about 2 m. away, was a rectangular brick structure measuring 0.75 by 1.55 m. Only half of it survived together with the first course. Merlin noted that its position, exactly in line with the building's major axis, suggested that this was an open-air altar.

Behind the table, in the inner part of the building, numerous fragments of terracotta statuettes and reliefs were retrieved. Merlin compiled a catalogue and few illustrations (1919: 180-196, figs 2-8).[2] These included a statuette of a pig buried

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[1] The location of the site given in **FIGURE 119** is only approximate as I was unable to locate an early twentieth-century map of the Gulf of Tunis which would show the topographic details that are provided by Merlin (1919: 178).

[2] Two of the illustrations in Merlin (1919: figs 2, 3) have been reproduced by Fantar (1986: plate 89).

beneath the mosaic floor against the back wall of the chapel, the upper half of a figure probably seated in between two columns and holding what looks like an axe, two caryathids, and terracotta panels depicting Victory surmounted by a Gorgon's head and, in another, Victory placed above a floral design. The terracotta frieze depicts a number of human figures in relief, but as Merlin notes (1919: 188) the lack of iconograpic attributes makes identification difficult.

Merlin concluded his report by explaining that the edifice must have been a domestic temple, probably attached to a house discovered nearby (1919: 193). He argued that it was difficult to say which divinities were worshipped inside the building, but that the pig suggested the goddess Demeter. Merlin dated the remains to the Roman period (first century AD) on the basis of the terracotta reliefs recovered from within.

Gilbert and Colette Picard (1958: 52) contested Merlin's dating, argued that it predated the destruction of Carthage, but gave no good reason why the date had to be altered. This point was taken up by Alexandre Lézine (1959: 251-253) who studied the chapel and argued that the tripartite ground plan composed of a porch, a hall and a holy-of-holies, was essentially Oriental, recalling the layout of Solomon's temple. The lack of columns in the porch, so characteristic of the Jerusalem temple, could be explained because the entrance to the chapel at Sidi-bou-Saïd was too narrow to accomodate them. This idea that the Carthaginian chapel reproduced on a very small scale a Phoenician temple, of which King Solomon's was the prototype, has been promulgated by most scholars interested in Carthaginian history (e.g. Fantar 1986: 37, 1987: 107; Lancel 1995a: 215): following Lézine's conclusions, Marcel Le Glay (1966: 274) used the ground plan of the chapel at Sidi-bou-Saïd to defend the Oriental roots of Roman temples in the Carthaginian hinterland.

When the edifice at Sidi-bou-Saïd is considered in isolation, a modest case can be made to defend its religious nature. It is interesting that the terracottas were found in the inner part of the room behind the table, and the suggestion that they could have been displayed on the table can certainly be made. But this might not necessarily be

the case and the narrow space at the extreme end of the building could have served as a store for the terracottas, while the image of the pig was clearly buried beneath the floor. Yet, the position of the table, at the focal point of the axis of vision of whoever entered the building from outside, suggests that the main activity took place there. From the description, it seems that broken terracottas could be reconstructed; although the data are thin, it seems that the finds constituted a primary deposit. It is difficult to argue that the objects were directed to a divine being: it is the head with snakes that can be associated with a mythical being, the Gorgon, together with the figure, half human, half serpent, that can be identified with Scylla. But there the interpretation is based on an iconography understood from elsewhere. In this case, neither scale nor gesture are helpful criteria to distinguish between votive or cult image. If a sceptical position is taken, Sidi-bou-Saïd does not provide a clear answer.

3.11.3 Kerkouane

Site visit: 14 January 1996

Reported: —

Published: Fantar 1986: 147-221, plates 52-80, 83-86, 102-103, 109-113.

Description. Midway between Ras ed-Drek and Ras el-Melah on the peninsula of Cape Bon in Tunisia is the Punic site of Kerkouane, whose ancient name is unknown. Located right on the edge of the rocky coast lacking, however, a port, the site developed during the fifth-third centuries BC (**FIGURE 122**). Excavations here first by Pierre Cintas and Charles Saumagne (1952-1953, 1957-1961) (Cintas 1953), and later (starting 1965) by the Tunis *Institut Nationale d'Archeologie et d'Art* (now *Institut Nationale du Patrimoine*) led by Mhamed Fantar, uncovered a rich rural town with carefully laid out blocks of houses, equipped with hip-baths and served by streets. It is surrounded on the landward side by a double defensive wall with towers and gateways enclosing a total area of about seven or eight hectares. The lack of material dating to a period after the mid-third century BC suggests that the town was taken around that date, perhaps during the expedition to Cape Bon of the Roman consul Regulus (256-255 BC) during the first Punic war.

Within the excavated area (actually less than a third of the site), in a central position of the town, the Tunisian campaigns (July-August 1976) uncovered parts of a building which Fantar identified with a sanctuary (*sanctuaire*) (**FIGURE 122, 123**). It was built of a foundation of irregular blocks set in a mortar of earth and mud and decorated with a fine stucco; the rest of the structure would have been of mudbrick. Covering an area of about 400 m.², Fantar thought it was the largest Punic temple of the western Mediterranean (1986: 187; 1987: 107; 1988: 176). A report of the excavations has been published (Fantar 1986: 147-221). The stratigraphy encountered during the course of the work included two superimposed strata: the first, dark, about 0.30 m. deep, included fragments of pottery, stucco, and mudbrick; the second, lighter in colour, was rich in finds including coins, arrowheads, obsidian, and bone (Fantar 1986: 147). Excavation of the floor was only undertaken in the back room (*cour II*:

see below) in order to date the building, but the exercise proved futile (1986: 202). The complex, which is oriented NW-SE, includes an entrance flanked by two plinths for pilasters which lead into a vestibule (3.62 by 2.10 m.) served by a roughly rectangular benched room (6.57-6.37 by 2.13-2.10 m.) to the right (*salle à banquettes*) (1986: plates 52-57). Beyond the vestibule is an L-shaped yard (*cour I*) flanked by rooms of which the left wing has been left unexcavated (1986: plate 58). Midway along the E wall of the hall, a limestone block (0.75 by 0.74 by 0.45 m.) has been interpreted as an altar (*une table sacrificielle, un autel*) (1986: 153, plate 59). At the NW end of the hall are two rectangular solid structures built against each other at different times (A: 2.85-2.77 by 2.80 by 0.60 m.; B: 2.80-2.90 by 2.82-2.80 by 0.57 m.), identified by Fantar with podia for chapels (*chapelles*) (1986: plates 60, 103; also p. 203). The E wing was made up of a number of adjacent rooms: Fantar argues that this was a worskshop for the production of statuettes. The SE room (1) along the E wing included an elliptical kiln with fragments of terracotta figurines and animal bones (1986: 156, plates 62-65). Another room (4) was identified with a workroom (*atelier*) installed with a system of drains to store and channel water (1986: 69-70). The N extent of the workroom seems to have been a small yard: a heap of reddish clay in the middle suggested to Fantar that this was a storage space for clay used in the making of terracotta statuary (1986: 159, plate 72). Beyond the workshop was another yard (*cour II*) identified as 'l'aire sacrificielle' (1986: 170, plates 73-74). Excavation here revealed a layer of ash mixed with animal bone, pottery, metal and coins. Fantar refers to the layer as 'un véritable dépotoir de résidus, "de déchets de cuisine", d'objets perdus etc ...' (1986: 160). The only standing architecture within the yard included a wall of mudbrick flanked by a mass of bricks on one side and a scatter of large pebbles on the other for which Fantar presents a religious meaning (1986: plates 74-75, 185-188). One pit containing a number of pots 'relativement bien conservés' was found sunk in the floor of the yard, undoubtedly, according to Fantar, a reservoir of water indespensable in a sanctuary (1986: 161, 190-191, plate 76).

Fantar went to great lengths to defend the religious nature of the building he uncovered drawing parallels with a large number of alleged sanctuary and temple sites in the Levant including Israel, Syria and Iraq, and in the western Mediterranean (1986:

165-221). He explains that the twin pilasters arranged at the 'monumental' entrance to the alleged temple of Kerkouane recall a similar layout found at the sanctuary sites of Amrith (**3.1.2**), Kition (Kathari) (**3.3.2**), and mentioned in the biblical description of Solomon's temple; the twin columns are also seen on the stelae from the tophets and on an example from Sidon (Fantar 1986: 166-169). Fantar insists that the yard was an important feature of Phoenician temples, and the set-up at Kerkouane is paralleled by the layouts of sanctuaries at Amrith (**3.1.2**), Bostan esh-Sheikh (**3.2.1**), and Oumm el-'Amed (**3.2.3**); he even refers to the works of Conteneau (1949), Perrot & Chipiez (1885), Gsell (1920), and Barreca (1962) to lend weight to his argument (1986: 169-173). In the temple sites already cited an aedicule or *naos* was found inside the courtyard. Such is the case at Kerkouane, according to Fantar (1986: 174-176), who sees the podia at the end of the first yard (*cour I*) as bases for two aedicules (*naiskoi*), refering to works by Patroni (1904), Dunand (1973) and Lézine (1960) to make his point. Fantar maintained that on the basis of the twin pilasters at the entrance, the courtyard, the chapels on podia and the sacrificial table or altar, the building at Kerkouane could be identified with a sanctuary: 'On doit donc prendre acte de cette correspondence et déclarer que, du point de vue de sa morphologie architecturale, l'édifice de Kerkouane se présente comme un sanctuaire.' (1986: 176-177) Moreover, the SE orientation of the facade would tally with similar layouts at known temple sites in the East and in the West (1986: 198-202).

Fantar also considered the material retrieved within the temple compound to assert that the function of the building was a religious one (1986: 180-187). From a layer of ash and charcoal in the second yard (*cour II*), small bowls were recovered with ashes and bone fragments still attached to the surface. Fantar explains that the pottery is not of an unusual shape; only the contents are unusual and he suggests they they imply religious acts and sacrifices. Moreover, numerous fragments of terracotta figurines and statuettes were recovered which Fantar identifies with images of the divinity or offerings. Four stone blocks, one of which is decorated with an Egyptianising moulding, and a fifth of terracotta, were identified with altars (1986: 183-184, plates 93-96). One was lifted from *cour II* (1986: 185) but we are not told

whether it was the one with Egyptianising moulding or the other of terracotta, or whether it was one of the remaining three which look like any normal block of stone.

Discussion. Despite the lengths to which Fantar goes to justify seeing a religious building at Kerkouane, there are some problems in his presentation. Serge Lancel gives an inkling of this when he accepts that this was a religious complex but then claims that 'its precise purpose still eludes us' (1995a: 286). A reference to the alleged temple site is also omitted from some major publications, although it is included in others (see **Table 1.1**, especially Lipinski 1995a: 430, 432). The major problem with Fantar's contribution is that in presenting his case he falls victim to a circular argument. So for example, he identifies the rectangular block in *cour I* with an altar because the building is a temple (1986: 153); and yet, the building is a temple because, amongst other things, there is an altar within (1986: 176)! Moreover, in recalling other sites, he is assuming that the conclusions established for those sites are correct and analogies are possible. But this is not always the case: for example, it *might* be possible to see similarities between the courtyard at Oumm el-'Amed (**3.2.3**) and Kerkouane, but not with the Ma'abed at Amrith (**3.1.2**) because here the open space was actually a basin of water; at Bostan esh-Sheikh (**3.2.1**) we have *no* idea what existed on the podium.

To avoid the pitfalls outlined, we shall proceed to consider the site of Kerkouane *in isolation.* Unfortunately, interpretation of the building and the material is hindered by the nature of the publication. First of all, a detailed plan of the building has not been published; neither have we got section drawings of the layers excavated or a catalogue of the pottery, nor a plan noting the position of the material recovered. Unfortunately, moreover, the catalogue of terracottas (1986: 307-312) does not generally include an entry for the findspot and when this is done in the caption to the plate depicting a fine example of a bell-shaped statuette (0.25 m. high) (1986: 307, plate 18), it simply says 'sanctuaire de Kerkouane' (1986: 307, plate 18; see also plates 85-86, 109-113); another similar statuette is captioned 'Kerkouane ville' (1986: plate 115). There is not much that can be said of these terracottas without a systematic indication of their finspot. What we do know, however, is that an unspecified number

were retrieved from the room where the kiln is located. If we accept Fantar's opinion that the rooms served as workshops for the production of terracottas then the context of the statuettes is an industrial one: it is possible to argue by *reference to other sites* that the statuettes relate to religious practices, but here at Kerkouane they do not seem to be in a context which can be established as religious. Nothing really marks out the building from the rest of the site, apart from its extent. Fantar himself notes that the construction techniques employed in the building are similar to those employed elsewhere on site, even in the domestic quarters (1986: 165), although Egyptianizing motifs are assumed from a scatter of cornice blocks in *Rue des Artisans* and *Rue du Temple* for which, however, no details are given (1986: 217); only the twin pilasters constitute an unusual entrance which is hardly a strong criterion to defend the religious nature of the building. Moreover, Fantar's identification of the podia with chapels is fortuitous: no information is available that would allow us to see these rectangular constructions as special facilities for the display of objects. Using the plan and layout as criteria for identifying the complex with a sanctuary is complicated by the fact that the complex seems to have undergone a number of building phases, as Fantar himself points out (1986: 203-204): indeed, the W wall of the wing of rooms identified with workshops is clearly later than the podium (B), and if we erase that whole wing from the plan together with the later podium (A), the first (B) would occupy a central position at the back of a large rectangular space, on the same axis as the block Fantar identified with an altar. But these are no more than suggestions and no clear answer is provided. The only datum which sticks out is the discovery of an unspecified number of small bowls found in a layer of ash and charcoal in *cour II*, with bones still attached to the surface, and in association with fragments of statuettes. Fantar's suggestion that these were the remains of sacrificial offerings is worth considering, if only because no convincing alternative hypothesis to explain them comes to mind. Fantar's description of the same material — 'un véritable dépotoir de résidus, "de déchets de cuisine", d'objets perdus etc ...' (1986: 160) — although contradictory as to its use in systemic context (domestic *versus* religious), suggests that we are dealing here with some sort of refuse, a secondary context therefore.

On the basis of what has been discussed thus far, the case for seeing this building at Kerkouane as a religious edifice remains unconvincing.

3.11.4 Ras ed-Drek

Site visit: 12 January 1996

Reported: Fantar 1972-1973: 276-277

Published: Barreca & Fantar 1983: 17-28, 41-63; Fantar 1986: 40-46, plates 34-42

Description and Discussion. In 1966, during the Italo-Tunisian archaeological campaigns on Cape Bon in Tunisia, the remains of an edifice were uncovered on a reef extending out to sea beneath the escarpment of a cape known as Ras ed-Drek (Cape Terror), where the team had just excavated a Punic fortress dating to the fifth century BC (Fantar 1971: 142-143; Barreca & Fantar 1983: 17-28, 41-63) (**FIGURE 124**). The building consisted of a rectangular structure (11.30 x 7.85 m) built of ashlar blocks laid in rock-cut channels. The inner space was divided traversally into four bays, in one of which an L-shaped cistern of the type known at Carthage was uncovered (Fantar 1986: 40-46, plates 34-42) (**FIGURE 125**). Given the fact that the rock surface on which the edifice was built is steeply inclined towards the sea, only the foundations of the building survived after removal of superficial fill. In fact, the lack of diagnostic pottery or of other remains made it difficult for the excavators to date the edifice and determine its function. Yet, by association with a nearby Punic fortress a fourth/second century date was put forward for the remains (Fantar 1972-1973: 276, 1986: 50).

As for the function of the building, Mhmed Fantar has gone through great lengths in putting forward an argument to sustain his hypothesis that the edifice was a temple. Associations with the remains discovered at Capo San Marco (Tharros) (**3.8.12**) in Sardinia, the cistern, and above all the presence of a fragment of an Egyptianising cavetto cornice, have all been brought into play to sustain his argument. In Fantar's opinion the surviving remains must have formed part of a podium on which the temple was built, and the cistern was essential to store the water needed for the ritual practices (Fantar 1986: 46-48, plate 41). Fantar also thought that the location of the edifice determined its religious nature: '[...] on peut difficilement

envisager un édifice à caractère militaire, puisque tout près de là, on a les restes d'une forteresse. L'emplacement ne semble pas non plus convenir à une station d'information d'émission ou de réception de signaux par le feu ou par la fumée. Rien n'autorise à y reconnaître les vestiges d'un phare. En procédant par élimination, l'hypothèse du temple demeure favorite.' (Fantar 1986: 47, 195) Fantar's hypothesis has been largely accepted in the general literature (Moscati 1968b: 65) although certain authors prefer to use an interrogation mark to show uncertainty (Lancel 1995a: 264, caption to fig. 139).

Fantar even suggested that if the building was a temple than its location overlooking the sea and in the vicinity of a fortress determined the nature of the deity worshipped: 'cette divinité peut être d'aielleurs à la fois guerrière et marine' (Fantar 1970: 89), most probably Phoenician Astarte (Fantar 1972-1973: 277; 1973: 27). Moreover, in an interesting analysis, Fantar also considers the location of the rectangular edifice at Ras ed-Drek in the context of the accepted identification of Cape Bon with the *hermaia akra* and the *Promuntorium Mercurii* of the Classical geographers (Fantar 1984: 11-12 n. 3; 1977: 123 n. 413; 1986: 211 n. 471).

The remains uncovered at Ras ed-Drek do not meet any of the criteria put forward in CHAPTER II. There are no finds which are of symbolic significance, and it is possible to think of some different function for this site: there is no reason why it could not have been a look-out post or a beacon, contrary to what is claimed by Fantar. The function of the site is not clear, and we are certainly not justified in describing the structure under consideration as a temple or sanctuary.

CHAPTER IV

In Search of a Pattern:

Identifying Phoenician & Punic Religious Space

4.0 Introduction.

The sites described in the literature as Phoenician and/or Punic sanctuaries, temples or shrines, were described in CHAPTER III. The presentation of the data shows that it *is* difficult, if not impossible, to defend the religious nature of archaeological sites in a conclusive manner if those sites are considered *in isolation*: of the 48 sites discussed, only 13 provided sufficient evidence for a good case to be made about their religious nature. Undoubtedly some would hold that archaeologists rarely ever consider their sites in complete isolation. Indeed, one can argue that the process of interpreting the nature of a new site or a new find starts in the field where analogies and comparisons are sought and found, drawn from a database of literary sources, sites, material and comparative reading, built through years of experience and research. The rigorous and laborious, if not boring, method adopted in CHAPTER III might appear to be a dead end, but we should not forget that this initial stage of interpretation was undertaken with a clear purpose in mind: that is, to avoid the logical fallacies, the pitfalls and circular arguments that afflict the study of Phoenician and Punic religious sites. Now, we can look at the data from a wider angle, first by

region, and then across the entire Mediterranean. The chapter reviews the data from CHAPTER III, and looks for patterns to answer the questions at the end of CHAPTER II; it also explains the patterns by defining religious sites by characteristics that mark them out as "Phoenician" and "Punic". The first part concerns the East, and the second moves to the West; the third part is concerned with sites along the seaways of the Mediterranean.

4.1 Looking for a pattern and the question of a Phoenician and Punic identity.

It is necessary, first, to consider some of the immediate results which arise from the study of the data, and second, to make clear the procedure used to look for order in them.

The first results are not very positive. I hope to have made clear for each site entry the problems inherent in the archaeological excavations, and their poor publication. It is convenient to repeat what I think are striking observations:

1. Of all the sites, only 13 have been established as religious places, when these were considered in isolation, and for 11 of them this was mainly based on the inscriptional data collected.

2. Only 12 (25%) sites have been excavated, or partly excavated, stratigraphically where archaeologists have made explicit reference to layers, strata, loci or levels.[1]

3. Only four sites have had some of their finds (e.g. statuary) plotted in two or three dimensions.[2]

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[1] Tell Sukas and Mina Sukas, Sarepta, Kition (Kathari), Kition (Bamboula), Meniko (Litharkes), Kommos, Tas-Silg, Pyrgi, Mozia, Antas, Monte Sirai, Gorham's Cave.
[2] Tell Sukas, Mina Sukas, Oumm el-'Amed, Kommos.

4. Only 11 sites have had their pottery published in an adequate way with scaled drawings of ware types and profiles.[3]

5. In three cases, all in Sardinia,[4] the existence of a religious building has been inferred on the basis of unexcavated remains and/or a scatter of architectural blocks. Elsewhere, in one case, the site is known only through the descriptions of Ernest Renan,[5] while another six cannot be visited because they were either backfilled or destroyed after the excavations.[6]

6. Only 11 sites have had their faunal material noted, but to date, *none* have had specialist reports published. No sites reported the discovery and examination of any floral material (**Table 4.3**).

7. In 12 sites the name of the deity who was the subject of adoration is preserved on inscriptions discovered on site; in six cases the deity is assumed from the iconography (**Table 4.4**).

Despite all this, I still think that when one looks carefully at the information, enough is available for an account of Phoenician and Punic religious sites. The only way forward is to consider a number of sites together rather than in isolation. Colin Renfrew was compelled to use this method to identify the nature of the site he uncovered at Phylakopi on the island of Melos. His argument (1985: 365-368) was that, 'observations from a number of different sites can reliably establish or validate a hypothesis which cannot be documented from any one [site] taken in isolation'. Of course we *cannot* simply assume that there was one Phoenician and Punic religion across the entire Mediterranean spanning eight or nine centuries, like others have hypothesized for Phoenician society and its institutions (e.g. Aubet 1994: 92). So we will proceed with a recovery of pattern by region, starting with the Levant, the

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[3] Tell Sukas, Mina Sukas, Kharayeb, Oumm el-'Amed, Sarepta, Kition-Bamboula (E. Gjerstad), Meniko-Litharkes, Tas-Silg, Pyrgi, Grotta del Papa, Gorham's Cave.

[4] Matzanni, Sant'Antioco, Tharros (Tempio delle Gole Egizie).

[5] Aïn el-Hayât.

homeland of the Phoenicians. We will then move westwards, to consider the rest of the sites. The sphere of interaction between East and West has to be demonstrated from shared idioms of expression — artifact types, architectural forms, symbol systems, and so forth. Of course, the recurrence of similar symbols need not imply similar beliefs, and regional diversity in the meaning and content of the cult practices is to be expected given the time span we are working with.

Related to this issue is that regarding the question of what constitutes a Phoenician and Punic identity. Earlier in CHAPTER I, we defined the terms "Phoenician" and "Punic" loosely, bound by geographical and chronological parameters which served as a general framework for the preliminary discussion of the sites in the last chapter. Now it is necessary to move beyond those definitions and to see them in the context of the Phoenician and colonial process, and that which ensued in the mid-sixth century BC when Carthage took control of Phoenician activities in the West.

A review of literature dealing with the Phoenician colonization of the western Mediterranean (van Dommelen 1997a: 306-308) shows that early approaches were studies set within an evolutionary framework borrowed from classical archaeology. Definitions of early Phoenician settlements in the West depended on a period of pre-colonial contacts leading to small but genuinely autonomous colonial foundations (e.g. Whittaker 1974: 64) – in tune with Alan Blakeway's notion of 'trade before the flag' (1932-1933). Only recently has an attempt been made to redress the picture, to consider the Phoenician trading diaspora not within a Greek paradigm, but as a process born in the Levant as the result of a series of multiple, inter-related causes (Curtin 1984; Aubet 1994: 70-91; Niemeyer 1990, 1993 *contra* Whittaker 1974). Cultural diffusion from the Orient has returned in the guise of world system theories and core-periphery models (Champion 1989), which emphasize the economic relationship that contrasts zones of accumulation of surplus (the core: the Assyrian Empire through Phoenician intermediaries) and zones of extraction (the periphery: Etruria, Sardinia, Iberia) (Frankenstein 1979, Cunliffe 1995: 15-19). In the meantime,

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[6] Meniko, Bithia, Cagliari (Via Malta), Illa Plana, Carton Chapel, Sidi-Bou-Saïd.

however, the indigenous people have, with some exceptions, been relegated to an "Orientalising" background, presented as the 'less-civilized' half (Harden 1962: 164) – of a colonial relationship. The cultural identity of the two halves was taken for granted.

Defining ethnicity and ethnic boundaries are two issues which many archaeologists consider a subjective undertaking. If we take Max Weber's (1961) definition of ethnicity where customs, language, religion, values, morality, and etiquette give expression to a group's self-conscious identity, the characteristics that leave a trace in the material record are few. Peter Ucko lets us in on the game: 'It appears that archaeology is not in a position to pinpoint what are ethno-specific artefacts in most, or any, situations.' (Ucko 1989: xviii; also Renfrew & Bahn 1996: 180) Even when all traits are visible, such as in certain historical periods, ethnographic work shows clearly that delineating boundaries between ethnic groups on the basis of material culture, is a complex, sometimes impossible, undertaking (Barth 1969). In the words of one conference organizer studying archaeological approaches to cultural identity: '[...] in various different contexts, many of the extreme problems of matching the archaeological and ethnographic record, [demonstrate] a lack of congruence which does little to support the view of continuity in ethnic identities' (Ucko 1989: xvi; also Finkelstein 1997). In certain colonial situations, the divide between colonizers and colonized is more apparent than real, and the processes of blending subordinate and dominant cultures cannot always be explained simply in terms of 'culture contact' and 'culture change' because they are as 'ambiguous' as they are 'murky' (van Dommelen 1997a: 308). The exercise is made more difficult because a community might be completely invisible in the archaeological record. Take for example the case of the Assyrian colony of merchants at Kanesh, where had it not been for the discovery of cuneiform tablets which recorded trade deals in textiles, archaeologists could not have guessed that they were excavating the houses of a sizeable foreign community which had simply used local architecture and pottery; 'a disconcerting object lesson for the archaeologist' indeed (Postgate 1992: 215). This example is very informative because historical sources recall that the Phoenicians were particularly renowned for their textiles, which to my knowledge, have never

been recovered by archaeologists save indirectly, through the heaps of murex shells and dyeing vats. There is also another problem: for the Phoenicians in their homeland, history and geography show that each major city played an important, at times autonomous, role throughout the first millennium BC, and the likelihood that each city undertook its own trade ventures overseas is an attractive supposition (Ciasca 1988-1989: 70; Peckham 1992: 410-411). However, this theory has not yielded to the archaeological evidence and attempts to do so (Peckham 1992) have, in my opinion, been unsuccessful. The upshot of this is the inability of differentiating Sidonians, Tyrians, Byblites, and so forth, from the major cities in the Levant when their material culture turns up in the West.

These cautionary thoughts are easier to formulate than to apply in practice. But that does not mean that issues of identity and colonialism cannot be tackled by archaeologists. Instead, it emphasizes that for specific situations we have to decide how far the archaeological evidence is capable of interpretation, and to realize that that interpretation is often subjective, influenced by the received wisdom and knowledge of our own times. Indeed, the line of argument followed here is that the method of inquiry will not depend on 'laws of cultural dominance', theory-laden generalizations and probabilistic models that were popular in the wake of the New Archaeology (e.g. Newson 1978, Bartel 1985) but on a close *contextual* study of *specific* colonial situations (Thomas 1994: ix), where the concept of 'acculturation'[7] is seen alongside that of 'hybridization'.[8] More important for our purposes, is the fact that ritual behaviour, directed by a *shared* system of beliefs, constitutes one defining characteristic of ethnicity, even if, perhaps, not the most conservative one. Van Dommelen's recent, and in my opinion, successful, attempt (1997a: 313-318) to study Punic colonial situations in west-central Sardinia depended on a study that combined site-location patterning with cult practices. For the latter, a comparative study of

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[7] Acculturation has been defined as a process of culture change that occurs 'when groups of individuals having different cultures come into direct and continuous contact with subsequent modifications in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups' (Redfield *et al.* 1935: 229-230, as quoted in Stone 1995: 8). Also, 'acculturation refers to the integration of a trait into the recipient culture system to the point that members of the recipient culture produce the item themselves and no longer perceive of it as "foreign"' (Stone 1995: 8).

terracotta figurines and statuary – based on exact details (shape, typology, etc.) and their frequency – allowed the author to gauge the combination of indigenous and Punic features which he interpreted as a local, indigenous response to Punic colonialism. Both the material culture in the rural settlements, and the burial evidence, had a homogenous Punic character; only the *religious contexts* provided a varied composition, 'presumably because the local population perceived it as central to their own identity, providing a means to distinguish themselves from the dominant Carthaginian colonizers' (van Dommelen 1997a: 320).

It is hoped that this premise justifies the lengths undertaken below to tease out the details from the archaeological data presented in the last chapter. This will help us throw light on, and probe, the 'murky' and 'ambiguous' contact situation that ensues when two or more cultures meet.

One final point: whereas in CHAPTER III I refrained from attaching functional labels to the sites and instead adopted the nomenclature used by the excavators, here I will be using the following descriptive terminology, based on the study of architectural terms that occur written in Phoenician on the gold sheets from Pyrgi (Colonna 1989-1990) (**3.6.1**). I will be using the word "shrine" to refer to a discrete spatial unit where the religious image or symbolic focus is kept, whether this is a niche or aedicule, or simply a platform or shelf; this is equivalent to the Greek *naos*. A shrine is placed inside a "temple", a *large* building set aside for religious worship; a *smaller* building which serves the same purpose is a "chapel". A temple can be surrounded by a wall or *temenos*; the space that is defined by the wall constitutes the "sanctuary".

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[8] Hybridization refers to 'the ways in which social, economic or ethnic groups of people construct a distinct identity within the colonial context and situate themselves with respect to the dominant, i.e. colonial culture.' (van Dommelen 1997a: 309).

PART I

4.2 The Levant (Syria and Lebanon).

'To satisfy my wish to get the best information I possibly could on this subject, I made a voyage to Tyre in Phoenicia, because I had heard there was a temple there, of great sanctity, dedicated to Heracles. I visited the temple, and found that the offerings which adorned it were numerous and valuable, not the least remarkable being two pillars, one of pure gold, the other of emerald which gleamed in the dark with a strange radiance.'

– HERODOTUS II, 44

'Between Judea and Syria lies Carmel: this is the name given to both the mountain and the divinity. The god has no image or temple — such is the rule handed down by the fathers; there is only an altar and the worship of the god. '

– TACITUS II, 78

4.2.1 Iron Age II (1000-586 BC).

Room 71 at Sarepta presents the strongest case for being a place for religious ritual, a chapel; the *Ma'abed* at Amrith, Mina Sukas, Bostan esh-Sheikh, and Oumm el-'Amed present strong cases but not entirely convincing ones; Aïn el-Hayât and Kharayeb produce no clear answers, whereas the case for Wasta is rather weak. Sarepta's importance is twofold: it is the only site *in the Phoenician heartland* which provides the strongest case, and the putative Shrine 1 (Room 71) dates to the time (*ca.* eighth-seventh centuries BC) when the Phoenicians had started their colonial ventures westwards, following firm Assyrian domination over Syria and Palestine. Sarepta is the only benchmark we have against which to assess possible Phoenician religious sites elsewhere. To date, we are not in a position to know whether Sarepta is representative of other Phoenician sites in the homeland. We saw earlier that Room 71 consists of a rectangular room with benches along three walls, and a low platform or table built against the western, short wall. The original entrance was at the end of the southern long wall giving a bent-entry layout. This was eventually blocked,

apparently for practical reasons, and an entrance made in the short wall opposite the platform or table altering the plan to a long room. We also noted that the concentration of figurines, scarabs and amulets marked out the room from the entire site, and that such a datum may, with considerable confidence, be taken to infer a special purpose for the room. The concentration of these artefacts and pottery lamps around the extant remains of the platform – a primary archaeological context – was taken to suggest that the objects had fallen from this facility upon which they had been displayed; the gestures of the figurines also suggested that some of these represented votaries. Whatever was placed on the platform, or in front of it in a socket in the ground, perhaps to focus the attention of worshippers, did not survive. Indeed, a cult image, bigger than the rest of the figurines could not be identified, although the suggestion was made that the divinity here was Tanit-Ashtart, mentioned on the inscription on ivory found within the room.

This is all the information that we possess for a religious building from the coastal strip of Phoenicia for a two-hundred year span: no monumental temple, no tripartite divisions, no pair of pillars, but a small room with an overall area of about 17 square metres, providing enough space for 15, perhaps 20 worshippers. The site is not the classic Phoenician city (Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, Arwad, or Beirut) but a minor coastal settlement specialising, after about 800 BC, in fine red-burnished ceramics for export. Despite Assyrian domination over the Phoenician coastal strip at this time,[9] the strong connection with Egypt remains, as seen in the overtly Egyptian themes of the amulets deposited in the shrine.[10] It would be plausible to compare Room 71 at

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[9] Assyrian campaigns in the Near East were conducted by Asurnasirpal II (839-859 BC), Shalmanaser III (858-824 BC) and Tiglapileser III (745-727 BC). Special treatment was given to the city of Tyre to pursue her trade overseas (see Aubet 1994: 57-61), and no evidence of destruction is attested throughout the smooth transition from Period VII to Period VIII in Area II, X at Sarepta (Khalifeh 1988: 155; similarly at Area II, Y: Anderson 1988: 424). About Shalmanser's campaigns and their record on the Balawat gates, see M. Marcus 1987.

[10] The presence of Egyptian objects at Sarepta in the eighth century fits well with what Markoe (1990: 17-18) identifies as the second peak period of Egyptian artistic influence in the Levant. While some scant evidence exists for Assryian influence in Trans-Jordan (Bennett 1978, 1982), nothing of the sort can be claimed for the material remains at Sarepta. The ivory head of a woman from Shrine 1 with parallels at Khorsabad (Pritchard 1975: 26-28, fig. 43.1) is as Phoenician as Sarepta can be, with certain motifs – the wig, the *uraeus* symbol on the forehead, the lotus on the collar – being clearly Egyptianizing. From Bikai's excavations at Tyre (Stratum XV) only a cylinder seal showing a priestess making a sacrifice before the Assyrian god Ninurta (Porada 1978: fig. 1a, plate 44.16) and dated to the time of Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208 BC) can be cited as an Assyrian find.

Sarepta with other sites in Syria and Palestine on the basis that there was contact between the southern Phoenician coast and Israelite sites in northern Palestine.[11] But seeking parallels in the Levant is difficult. In his survey of temples and cult places, Wright (1985) observed such a great variety in the designs, that he remarked, 'it is impossible to talk of the Palestinian temple as it is possible to talk of e.g. the Greek temple or the Egyptian temple' (p. 227), and that, 'the interesting possibility of ethnic determination of temple-types is alas! little illustrated by the available evidence [...]' (p. 245; also, Mazar 1992: 161). In fact, parallels dating to Iron Age II B-C (900-586 BC) hardly exist and they are diversified in plan and layout. Of the temples listed in the surveys by Ottosson (1980), Wright (1985: 216-225) and Mazar (1992), only Tel 'Arad (Strata X-VII: ninth-seventh centuries BC)[12] and Tel Dan (Stratum III: ninth-eighth centuries BC)[13] would be contemporary in part with Sarepta's Shrine 1.[14] But the buildings identified with religious complexes at these two sites are different from Sarepta in their layout. Although Phoenician material has been found at Beersheva,

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[11] Holladay (1995: 379-381, figs 12-13), for instance, argues that the close similarity between the pottery of Sarepta and Hazor through time is indicative of southern Phoenician contact with the metropolitan centres of the north-central Palestinian highlands. While admitting that the Tyrian contribution in Palestine during the period of the early monarchy (*c.* 1000-842 BC) is difficult to gauge in the material record, he argues that contact increased during the time of the Omride dynasty (*c.* 872-854 BC). By using Anderson's (1988) citations of close parallels between the pottery of Sarepta and Hazor – the most closely stratified northern site in Palestine – he notes that the quantity of Phoenician (or directly comparable) pottery at Hazor reaches a dramatic maximum at about 885 BC (18.5% of the total published pottery), decreasing thereafter (5%) before reaching another high (+8.5%) between about 815-760 BC; parallels drop to about 6% during the period, *c.* 760-733 BC (Stratum V at Hazor). Holladay's argument that the use of ashlar stonework at this time was a Phoenician monopoly is conjectural. The ashlar masonry at sites such as Megiddo, Samaria and Hazor pre-date those in Phoenician sites in the Levant or in the West. Shiloh (1979b: 73-74) notes this discrepancy and warns not to use architectural evidence for the existence of cultural ties between Phoenicia and Israel in the Iron Age. It is the later development (pier and rubble construction) that seems to be a Phoenician innovation, becoming popular again in the Persian period (Stern 1977). One thing is certain regarding Phoenician involvement here: the use of ashlar masonry in larger buildings of Israelite Iron Age sites would have made the use of cedar, imported from the highlands of Lebanon, essential to roof the large spans.

[12] Tel 'Arad, identified with the Biblical Arad, was an important city in the Negev desert, about 30 km. ENE of Beersheba. Excavations conducted in the Israelite citadel here by Ruth Amiran between 1971-1978 and 1980-1984, uncovered the remains of a temple complex. See Ottoson 1980: 108-111.

[13] Excavations by Avraham Biran at Tel Dan in the 1970s uncovered a large, stone platform approached by a flight of steps. See Ottoson 1980: 96.

[14] Ottoson (1980) also makes reference to a possible house shrine at Megiddo (Stratum VA, dating to Iron II A). A building (Structure 300) with a cultic function has been suggested for Stratum XIII (tenth century BC) on the Eastern Hillock at Tel Michal (Moshkovitz 1989: 69-70). But there are no similarities between this structure and Sarepta's Room 71.

near Arad 200 km. away, there is nothing that marks out the sites for comparison.[15] To expect common elements in religious symbolism, therefore, is a proposition which lacks any solid foundation.

There is one other site, that would partly overlap chronologically with Sarepta's Shrine 1, and that is the building uncovered at Tell Sukas in northern Syria pertaining to Period G^3 (675-588 BC). As discussed earlier, no movable finds were made inside the room, on its floor, that would allow us to present a good case for seeing a religious building here; as it is, the case rests on a consideration of the plan. Like Sarepta, this is essentially a long room, wider at the E end oriented WNW-ESE, with an entrance from one of the short sides, which probably had a support in the middle. At the W end both rooms have a low platform or installation, albeit damaged and of an unclear nature in the case of Tell Sukas. Moreover, at the latter site there are no benches, along the long walls, and it is bigger than Sarepta, covering an area of about 30 square metres.[16] It is unlikely that the orientation of this very room was intentional, since the adjoining rectangular structures at Tell Sukas – the so-called "high place" and the "altar" – all follow a different orientation. But are we justified in seeking comparisons between Tell Sukas and Sarepta? We have already noted earlier (**3.1.3.1**) that the limited amount of Greek pottery in layers pertaining to Period G^3, both in the religious area and the habitation quarters, induced some scholars to redefine the Greekness of Tell Sukas (Corbett 1983; Lund 1986: 190; Boardman 1990: 173). Whether we should call Tell Sukas Phoenician – but settled by *some* Greeks (Riis 1970: 129) – North Syrian or Aramean as Boardman (1990: 182) would have it for settlements surrounding Al Mina at this period, is a moot question. If we go by the remark of the specialist who published the Near Eastern pottery from Tell Sukas, that 'Tyre in Metropolitan Phoenicia had no very close relations with the North during the Iron Age, as the pottery types differ slightly from those found at Sukas' (Buhl 1983: 124), then it seems that reservations for calling Tell Sukas in Period G^3

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[15] Holladay (1995: 384-385) notes 'bichrome Phoenician jugs, Phoenician or Phoenician-influenced wine (?) amphorae, a Phoenician red burnished bowl [...]' from Stratum II at Tel Masos in southern Palestine, near Beersheva.

[16] The similarities between this building at Tell Sukas and Room 71at Sarepta have been overstated by Brody who thinks they are 'identical' (1996: 90).

"Phoenician" are in order.[17] It would also be tempting to read more into the occurrence of pig bones right throughout the site's history (**Table 4.3**), if only because textual references tell us that the eating of pig was not allowed in Phoenician temples sacred to Melqart at Thasos and Gadir (Lipinski 1995a: 489-490). But in the absence of a specialist report, and the timely remarks by others that pig bones can only used with caution to identify ethnicity (Hesse & Wapnish 1997), this issue would rather not be pursued. In view of this, I would refrain from drawing conclusions about the nature and function of the rectangular room of Period G^3 on the basis of Sarepta's Shrine 1. In my opinion, the case for Tell Sukas remains an open question.[18]

There is one further issue that falls within the chronological period being discussed in this sub-section and which ought to be mentioned here: this is the connection between the building of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem and the Phoenicians. Ottoson (1980: 111) lets us in on the game: 'Solomon's Temple is not an archaeological problem'; the architecture can only be reconstructed by a close reading of the Hebrew Bible (I Kings 6: 1-7; II Chronicles 3: 1-10; Ezekiel 40-43), and when this is done, reconstructions vary.[19] The temple of Solomon was completed in about 953 BC. It is described as a long tripartite building, with an eastern entrance. The three units organised on a straight axis are the vestibule or porch (*ulam*), the cella or

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[17] For a previous period (H^1: 850-675 BC), Riis (in Culican 1982: 79) noted that the red-slipped ware, the hallmark of Phoenician pottery in the homeland further south, are very rare. Unfortunately, when the Iron Age pottery from Sarepta was published, both Khalifeh's (1988) and Anderson's (1988) reports failed to take into account the Near Eastern pottery of Tell Sukas published by Buhl a few years earlier (Buhl 1983). The reasons for this may be that Anderson's report published in 1988 was based on a doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Pennsylvania in 1979. This explains why no reference is made to Buhl's publication. As for Khalifeh's report, no information was available to see when the manuscript was prepared. On the other hand, Buhl's only reference to Sarepta (Pritchard 1975) is made when noting the absence of two-spouted Iron Age lamps at Tell Sukas (Buhl 1983: 118 n. 761). However, had the publications been available, I do not think that parallels would have been drawn with Sarepta. Indeed, the pottery from Stratum B (sixth-fifth centuries BC) presented by Anderson (1988: plate 38) does not find parallels at Tell Sukas with the exception of the lamp (No. 18, type L-9) which resembles a similar one dated to Period G^3 from Tell Sukas (Buhl 1983: No. 346 in fig. 17 and plate 20).

[18] I shall, however, recall the Period G^3-remains at Tell Sukas when I will discuss Kommos (Crete) below.

[19] The literature on Solomon's temple is overwhelming. Synthetic accounts with bibliography can be found in Fritz (1987), Meyers (1992) and Lundquist (1997). The fundamental work remains that of Busink (1970-1980). A detailed more accessible analysis has been published by Wright (1985: 254-267), who remarks that: '[...] Solomon's Temple can be made into as many different styles of building as ingenuity can fabricate versions of the *ulam*'. A reconstruction is complicated by different readings of Solomon's reign and exploits as narrated in the Bible. See Millard (1991) *contra* Miller (1991).

nave (*hekhal*), and the inner sanctuary (*debir*). Most scholars have sought the origins of this tripartite layout in excavated temple sites in the Levant. Lundquist (1997: 327) for instance, argues that the materials and technological expertise which the Phoenicians from Tyre took with them to Jerusalem on Solomon's special request, were also 'accompanied by an architectural plan – which may mean that the First Temple was Phoenician in style'.[20] Lundquist adds that a long tradition existed in Syria and Phoenicia of tripartite, straight-axis temples. The examples he cites are Temple D from Ebla (Tell Mardikh) in North Syria dating to Middle Bronze Age I, and the three Late Bronze Age temples from Emar (Meskene) on the west banks of the Euphrates also in Syria. However, no parallels are cited from Phoenicia. William Dever (1990: 111-112), like others before him (Harden 1962: 91; Moscati 1968d: 73), prefers to cite a slightly later parallel from Tell Ta'ayinat in northern Syria where excavations undertaken in the 1930s by the Oriental Institute of Chicago uncovered the remains of a building divided into three spaces along its major axis; entrance was through a porch with two columns *in antis* resting on a pair of lions (McEwan 1937: figs. 6-7; Haines 1971: 53-57, plates 80-82, 100, 103, 105; Fritz 1987: 42-43). The edifice was in use between the beginning of the eighth century to about 680 BC.[21] Dever states that the building from Tell Ta'ayinat 'closely fitted the Biblical description and thus confirmed the Phoenician provenance of the basic temple design'. Dever, also remarks that the tripartite division of Solomon's temple can be traced in the Late Bronze Age II temples at Hazor. At the other end of the debate is Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet (1992: 358-359) who has argued that 'Le temple de Jérusalem n'était pas, autant que l'on puisse en juger, un temple phénicien'.

There are major problems with what has been presented thus far. First, scholars have *assumed*, rather than demonstrated, that the settlement at Tell Ta'ayinat in northern Syria was indeed Phoenician, perhaps in an unconcious effort to find a prototype for, and prove correct, the biblical descriptions. This is bad archaeology and bad exegesis, as Roland de Vaux (1970) had proclaimed in a seminal article, and such

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[20] Also Schmitz (1992: 361).

[21] Dever dates the temple at Tell Ta'ayinat to the ninth century BC and so others (e.g. Harden 1962: 91; Meyers 1992: 355). The publication of the structural remains by Haines (1971), however, makes it

conclusions from major exponents of Syro-Palestinian archaeology are unexpected.[22] In view of what has been discussed above with reference to Tell Sukas, and the proposition put forward by some that Al Mina probably represents a Syrian port (perhaps for Tell Ta'ayinat) reflecting Assyrian expansion (Boardman 1990: 172, 176; S. Morris 1992: 127), then we have to be cautious in proclaiming the Phoenicians as the only cultural players in this region in the ninth and eighth centuries BC.[23] This is *not* to doubt their presence so far north: inscriptions written in Phoenician at sites such as Zinjirli (mid-ninth century BC) and Karatepe (eighth century BC), in a territory whose official language was Hittite or Aramaic, would suggest a political and cultural influence of some importance for the Phoenicians in this area (Aubet 1994: 53), while the discovery of 'a few purely Phoenician burials' at eighth/seventh century BC Bassit would suggest 'the presence of at least some Phoenicians', at this site – probably the port for Hama – on the Syrian coast. (Courbin 1990: 507, 509). If we had to use material culture as our yardstick, and in particular worked ivory and its distribution, then the work of Irene Winter (1976) has shown a clear separation between Phoenician and North Syrian spheres of contact and influence, with Tell Ta'ayinat falling in the North Syrian group (1976: fig. 1). Moreover, the pattern that arises from a distribution of red slip pottery is similar.[24]

Secondly, it is *conjectural* to argue that Solomon would have adopted a Phoenician plan for his temple simply because the craftsmen came from Tyre, and Briquel-Chatonnet (1992: 353-362) has spelled this out clearly. It is true that the

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clear that the temple was in use during the first two building phases of the nearby palace. The first phase was dated to the beginning of the eighth century, and the second to about 720-680 BC.

[22] Thus de Vaux (1970: 48): 'Archaeology does not confirm the text, which is what it is, it can only confirm the interpretation which we give it.' For a recent review of the debate see the collection of papers in Silbermann & Small (1997) especially those by Dever (1997) and Halpern (1997).

[23] Boardman (1990: 176) says: 'How different the folk living on the Mediterranean coast as at Al Mina, might have been is hard to say [...] the penetration of Phoenician objects and language in North Syria does not make the port-dwellers Phoenicians.'; *contra* Culican 1982: 79, 1991: 475.

[24] Culican (1982: 79) had noted that the red slip pottery at Tell Ta'ayinat (which remains unpublished) is very different from what you get at Al Mina which he identified with 'metropolitan Phoenician slip'; see also his later remarks (1991: 475). A study of the red slip pottey from the site of Bassit in Syria, and 55 km. north of Latakia, has shown that it is exactly similar to that of nearby Al Mina, Tyre, Sarepta and Sidon, thus confirming Culican's view (Braemer 1986). Braemer argues that the minimal quantity of this ceramic-type in sites such as Sukas, Bassit, Al Mina and Tarse in eighth-seventh century horizons, strongly suggests importation rather than local production; thus Courbin (1990: 507-108), despite the presence of some Phoenicians at Bassit: 'There is [...] no question of a Phoenician

building of Solomon's temple coincided with a period when relations between the Israelite and Tyrian kings were flourishing and joint trade ventures were pursued (Aubet 1994: 48-50); it is also true that the the Judean king Ahaz in the latter part of the eighth century BC ordered a new altar to be built for the Jeruslem Temple based on the plan of an altar he had seen in Damascus when paying tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (2 Kings 16: 10-16). But if we are forced to look for antecedents for a *langraum* (long room), tripartite layout, these will not be found in Canaanite Phoenicia, despite pronouncements to the contrary by Lundquist (above): neither the temples at Byblos,[25] nor those at Kamid el-Loz,[26] follow this design.[27] To argue for Phoenician intervention in the spread of what appears to be a North Syrian temple design is misplaced.

4.2.2 Neo-Babylonian and Persian Periods (586-332 BC).

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city, not even a Phoenician colony.' I would still not negate the possibility of Phoenician potters on site at Bassit: Phoenicians *must* have been living there if their burial was allowed.

[25] Fundamental is Saghieh's work (1983: 119-125) which reviews the evidence for religious architecture at Byblos. She notes in her Periods JI/JII (corresponding to EBIV/MBI: *c.* 2160-2000 BC; *ASHL* dates) temples appear of the megaron style with a *cella* preceded by columns set *in antis* (Temple XIV: plates 3.1, 28.4). But although Fritz (1987) argued that the megaron-style could have contributed to the long-room design, the Bybos Temple XIV is on a transversal, not a longitudinal, axis, so the overall appearance is "broad" not "long". Besides, continuity in architectural tradition at Byblos cannot be defended because Temple XIV (Phase 3) was found covered by a thick layer of ash followed by a drastic change in the layout of the sanctuary (Saghieh 1983: 18, 24, 132, Table 1, figs 7, 7a): the Obelisk Temple (Periods HI/HII, phases 4-6). This consists of an elevated podium and a series of stone obelisks or pillars around which a number of jars filled with figurines and weaponry were sunk into the floors (see Negbi 1976: 122-130). Saghieh dates the complex to before the Egyptian XIIth dynasty, c. 1855-1808 BC (*DAE* dates), because an obelisk dedicated to the prince of Byblos Abishemu, a contemporary of Ammenemes III, was found lying on the latest floor, 5 (Saghieh 1983: 19-20, fig. 7).

[26] Kamid el-Loz is situated in the SE extremity of the Bekaa valley between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountain ranges. Excavations were carried out between 1963-1964 and 1966-1981 under the direction of Rolf Hachmann, uncovered the remains of a series of Late Bronze Age temples built above each other (Hachmann 1978). The layout is distinctive and includes two separate paved courts with rooms at one end. About Phoenician penetration in the Bekaa valley in the Persian and Hellenistic periods see the comments by Grainger (1991: 19). He notes that this area should not be called Phoenician prior to the Hellenistic period. The recent publication of the corpus of Middle Bronze Age pottery from Tell Nebi Mend in the upper Bekaa (Bourke 1993), places sites like Hama, Tell Nebi Mend, Kamid el-Loz, and Hazor into one regional ceramic group, distinct from that of the coastal region. Bourke cites no similarities with the pottery of Tyre and Sarepta. This would have been a good course for the spread of a North Syrian temple design in the Iron Age without going through the coastal plain occupied by the Phoenicians. Armies were led into the Bekaa valley in the third century when the coastal plain was too strong (Grainger 1991: 90).

[27] Relevant in this context is the textual reference in Menander of Ephesus who ascribes to Hiram I of Tyre the building of the new temple of Melqart after the ancient temple of Tyre was demolished (Aubet 1994: 139). If we were to interpret this reference then I do not see why it should not be taken to

We can now consider the other sites from the Levant. Chronologically, the constructions at Tell Sukas (Periods G^2 and G^1), the Phase 1 and Phase 2 remains at Bostan esh-Sheikh, the *Ma'abed* and Aïn el-Hayât at Amrith should be considered next, followed by Kharayeb, Tell Sukas and Mina Sukas (**Table 4.1**). I argued in CHAPTER III that a religious status could be proposed for all these sites, but that the individual cases proposed were not entirely convincing ones. We shall therefore consider the sites together, leaving Sukas last.

The earlier constructions at these sites correspond to a new chapter in the history of the Levant: the rise of the Neo-Babylonian empire.[28] The Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for thirteen years (585-572 BC) after conquering Nineveh, Jerusalem and Damascus. Its king, Ithobaal III, was deported to Babylon together with his successor Baal II, bringing to an end the role that Tyre had played as trade intermediary to the Assyrian monarchs for five centuries (Frankenstein 1979). From the sixth century, Sidon takes over from Tyre as the most flourishing city on the Phoenician coast, and from 539 BC it fell under the rule of the Achaemenid Persians following Cyrus' conquest of Bablyon. This marks the beginning of the Persian period in Palestine.[29] For this period, Ephraim Stern (1982) has identified a common material culture, or *koine*, of distinctive characteristics stretching from Syria to Palestine. Sidon became the capital of the fifth Persian satrapy, and home to the fleet which faced the Greeks in the Persian wars, until the city was destroyed in 351 BC (Elayi 1989: 139).

At Bostan esh-Sheikh, in the coastal hinterland of Sidon, the end of the sixth century heralded changes to the architecture at the site, where Phase 1 remains are almost completely obliterated by those from Phase 2. As was discussed earlier, the Phase 1 remains consist mainly of traces of a corner of what the excavator supposed to

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imply that a new plan *could* have been adopted for the new temple. This would be another argument against seeing continuity over the centuries in Phoenician religious architecture.

[28] To this period correspond the Phase 1-remains at Bostan esh-Sheikh.

[29] The sites dated to this period include Aïn el-Hayât and the *Ma'abed* at Amrith, Bostan esh-Sheikh, (Phase 2), Tell Sukas (Periods G^2 and G^1, beginning of Period F), Mina Sukas (beginning of Period F: Floor I), Kharayeb (Phase 1).

have been a ziggurat-like monumental edifice built in the Neo-Babylonian period. Evidence to support this conjectural reconstruction is not available at the other contemporary sites discussed here, nor at other sites in Palestine, and I do not think that we are in a position, on current evidence, to pronounce decisively about the nature of the remains dating to this phase. For Phase 2, an alleged podium was built against the rock scarp, into which the kings of Sidon made sure to leave a record in Phoenician script of their feats in honour of the Phoenician deity Eshmun. One interesting point here is the clear change in the orientation of the architecture when compared to the previous phase. The influence of Achaemenid architecture can be seen in the capitals with the double protomes of a bull reclining back to back which have parallels in Persepolis (Frankfort 1996: 362 and Cool Root 1995: fig. 9; reproduced in Stern 1982: fig. 79)[30] and in the remains of the podium. Although the data are rather thin the choice of very large, overwhelming even (3 by 1 m., 1m. high courses), blocks of stone with drafted edges finds an ideal home in the imperial architecture of the Persian capitals, especially at Pasargadae.[31] On the other hand, the statuary which is associated with this second phase and recovered from a secondary context, bears stylistic affinities not with Persian examples, but with Greek and Cypriot ones of the fifth-fourth centuries BC (Dunand 1970; Markoe 1990: 117-118),[32] an observation which tallies well with the contemporary inscriptional datum of a Cypiot pilgrim from Paphos on a visit to Sidon.[33] Some Egyptian influence can also be postulated at Bostan esh-Sheikh on the basis of reutilized Egyptianizing cornice blocks (1.10 m. high) recovered from the NW corner of the podium (Dunand 1967b:

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30 The examples recovered by Dunand come from secondary contexts (1967: 41, plate 3.1; 1973: 15-16, plate 12.2). A similar capital was also recovered by Macridy-Bey from Sidon around 1900. See the reconstruction reproduced in Stern (1982: fig. 65; photograph in *CPP*: plate 1). These should not be confused with an Egyptianizing monument consisting of a limestone stele surmounted by addorsed lions or sphinxes resting on a cavetto cornice common in Cyprus from the latter half of the sixth century and extending in the early fifth (Markoe 1990: 113; Reyes 1994: plate 16).

31 Dunand (1973: 11) cites Samaria for similar masonry. The similarities with the stone platform at Tell-i Takht (throne hill) at Pasargadae are overwhelming; see Stronach 1978: 12-15, fig. 5, plates 2-6.

32 Ganzmann *et al.* (1987) have conducted a detailed study of the material recovered by Macridy between 1901 and 1903 now stored in Istanbul. The first Cypriot imports of white limestone and terracotta appear at the site at the beginning of the sixth century BC, reaching a peak in 550s in the time of Eshmunazar II. Local imitations were also being produced. By 500 BC the Cypriot imports decrease and in the period 480-460 BC, terracottas were being made by Greek craftsmen in Sidon.

33 Details are in Masson (1982: 47-49). The inscription written in the syllabic script of Cyprus was in the possession of an antiquarian from Sidon who claimed that it was recovered from the surroundings of the Temple of Eshmun at Bostan esh-Sheikh. The inscription invokes 'the Lady' probably Aphrodite of Paphos which Masson connects with Phoenician Astarte; thus Lipinski 1995a: 140-141.

43-44; Wagner 1980: 12, No. 9), and others built into an altar of Hellenistic date.[34] The adoption of architectural and sculptural styles which are clearly non-Persian induced Josette Elayi (1989: 258-259, 303) to argue that Sidon enjoyed autonomy during the Persian period, escaping acculturation from the Achaemenid overlords. Ultimately, Bostan esh-Sheikh was as Phoenician as its god Eshmun and the script used to honour him.

Like Bostan esh-Sheikh (Phase 2), the *Ma'abed* at Amrith in the territory of Arwad, shows a mixture of architectural styles, but the whole complex is unique for the entire Levant (Saliby 1997: 112).[35] The cavetto cornice on the aedicule and the lotus capitals recovered from the *favissa* are Egyptian (Dunand 1946-1948: Nos 118-119, plate 42). The whole idea of a *naos* or shrine hollowed out of a single block of stone, as with the aedicules at Aïn el-Hayât, appears to be Egyptian too and Wagner (1980: 106-107) has pointed out the closest parallel at the sanctuary of the ram-god at Mendes in the central Delta, consisting of one of four shrines, hewn out of an 8-m. monolithic granite block roofed with a low pyramid, dating to about 550 BC (Dynasty XXVI) (Wildung 1997: 176). The survival of Assyrian influences, however, can be claimed too if we assume that the square buildings or aedicules crowned with merlons and set in a river or a basin of water, depicted on the reliefs from Sargon's palace at Khorsabad, are local. But this is not certain, and Wagner (1980: 184 n. 9) suggests that the scene should be localized in Phoenicia itself and not in Assyria.[36] Moreover,

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[34] Dunand 1967: 42, 43-44. At least one example is visible in plate 3, 2; the altar is marked XI on fig. 1 in Dunand 1973b. The Egyptian influence on the architecture at Bostan esh-Sheikh parallels developments on the anthropoid sarcophagi from Sidon, clearly indebted to Egyptian prototypes (Elayi 1989: 262f.).

[35] The parallels drawn by Dunand & Saliby in their synthesis (1985) have been critically reviewed by Elayi (1990: 191) who calls them superficial.

[36] It is not clear-cut in which direction influences were travelling and what the Phoenicians owed to the Assyrians, and vice-versa. The cornice, resembling an echinus on the Khorsabad relief, is clearly not Egyptian; but a similar form is used for the Phoenician palace or temple, from which Luli, the king of Tyre and Sidon, flees in 701, as shown on a wall-relief in gypsum from the palace of Sennacherib (704-681 BC) (Barnett 1956: fig. 9, 1969: 7). To my knowledge, this architectural order is not known from Syria and Palestine, and Wright's survey (1985) includes nothing similar. However, one parallel can be traced at Tas-Silg in Malta on a capital composed of two superimposed cavetto elements, crowned by an echinus (see **3.5.1**). The boats on the Khorsabad relief are actually Phoenician showing two *hippoi*, double-ended coasters with a high stem shaped like the head of a horse. Similar boats are shown towing cedar logs on a relief from the palace of Sargon II (721-705 BC) at Khorsabad (*ANEP*: fig. 107), while on a bronze relief from the Balawat gates erected by Shalmaneser III (858-824 BC) the boats are being used by Phoenicians wearing pointed caps to ferry tribute from their island to the

the function of the buildings on the reliefs is not clear: Perrot & Chipiez (1884: figs 41-42) thought they were temples, but recently Read (1983: 36) referred to a similar representation as a 'columned summer-house'. Despite the fact that 150 years separate the Khorsabad reliefs and the *Ma'abed* at Amrith, Assyrian influence on Phoenician architecture might have lingered well into the Persian period, as seems to have been the case with the adoption of the crowstep as an architectural motif (Stern 1982: 66). In fact, at the *Ma'abed* instead of a row of Egyptian sacred serpents (*uraei*) crowning the cornice, we have a row of stepped merlons or crowsteps over a line of dentils; similar ones crest the parapet surrounding the basin.[37] Pillared cloisters around a square area are at home both in contemporary Persia (Wright 1985: 510) and in temple forecourts in Egypt (Wagner 1980: 106), but the two free-standing pillars crowned by double cavetto elements are clearly Egyptianizing. On the other hand, the similar twin structures surveyed at the spring nearby (Aïn el-Hayât), follow the Egyptian prototypes mentioned above, and are crowned by a cavetto cornice and a frieze of *uraei*. Wagner, however, has suggested that the winged sun-disc sculpted in relief on the roof of one of the aedicules is not Egyptianizing but Achaemenid (1980: 107).

This mixture of styles is evident also in the statuary recovered from the *favissa* at Amrith. Some bear a dress style which is typically Egyptianising based on New-Kingdom models, shown wearing full-length flowing kilts (*shenti*) with pendant ribbons and *uraeus*-decorated pendant flaps (*deventeau*) (Dunand 1944-1945: Nos 4-13, plates 15-17) (**PLATE 1b**). The statuary is "Phoenician" in that contemporary

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mainland (*ANEP*: fig. 356; Curtis & Read 1995: 98). Bass (1995: 1430) is of the opinion that the Assyrians built their own boats according to Phoenician prototypes.

[37] The history of the use of this architectural motif is a long one. Wright (1985: 150), citing an article by Giovanni Garbini, notes that the stepped merlon 'may go back to some remote origin in Iran' and that, with the Egyptian cavetto cornice, it was adapted and spread by the Assyrians throughout their empire. Perrot & Chipiez (1884: 263-268) have elaborated on the use of the 'créneau' calling it an 'appareil assyrien' (p. 263) and noted its presence on the monuments at Khorsabad (figs 102, 106) and on the reliefs there (figs 41-42); see also comments by Elayi 1990: 190. Dunand (1946-1948: 101) lamented that merlons could not be used as 'un indice d'ancienneté'. From the excavations on the coastal site of Tell Mevorach, south of Dor, Stern lifted a crenallated stone from a stratum dated to the tenth century BC (1974: 267). Phoenician bichrome pottery from the same stratum suggests a degree of contact with coastal Phoenicia to the north. Stern (1977) argued that this "Phoenician" architectural element and others reappeared in the Levant during the Persian and Hellenistic periods. Crowsteps become popular in the Persian imperial capitals too as at Susa and Persepolis (see Frankfort 1996: figs 416-417; Conteneau 1949: 96).

Egyptian sculptors were adopting Old-Kingdom dress styles instead (Markoe 1990).[38] Other examples, however, are shown wearing a dress which is represented in the statuary recovered from Gjerstad's excavations at Kition-Bamboula (**3.3.1.1**) in Cyprus: a full-length robe (Dunand 1944-1945: plate 24.33) or girdled tunic (1944-1945: plate 24), or full-length *chiton* with mantle (*himation*) draped over the left shoulder (1944-1945: plates 25-29; 1946-1948: plates 30-31) (**PLATE 1a, c**). Even the hair style is represented in Cypriot contexts: some of the heads are rendered in hair cut short with a wreath wound around it (Dunand 1946-1948: plate 37). The statuary recovered by Dunand at Amrith was imported from Cyprus (Markoe 1990: 120), since the fine white limestone from which they are sculpted outcrops there (Dunand 1946-1948: 90-91).[39]

The occurrence of statuary and the incidence of mixed architectural and sculptural styles, therefore, is a common datum of the three sites. Another common factor is the orientation of the monuments with the cardinal points. Unfortunately, we cannot compare pottery types to establish the degree of contact between Arwad, Sidon and beyond, because they are unpublished.

At this point, some further argument is needed to establish in a conclusive way the religious nature of the sites at Bostan esh-Sheikh (Phase 2), the *Ma'abed* and Aïn el-Hayât. The presence of water marks the sites out immediately: Bostan esh-Sheikh is built on the banks of a river (Nahr el-Awali) and includes an intricate system of channels to water appropriate areas of the site, and the *Ma'abed* at Amrith is essentially a huge rock-cut basin fed by a nearby spring, which also flows near the aedicules at Aïn el-Hayât. Undoubtedly, water must have been played an important part in the activities conducted here. At Bostan esh-Sheikh the 'temple at the river source [Ydlal] in the mountains' mentioned on the sarcophagus of the King of Sidon, Eshmunazar, is relevant.

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[38] This point has been well argued in an article by Glenn Markoe (1990). This Phoenician trait was adopted in Cypriot sculpture of the Archaic period. However, none of the statues uncovered from Kition-Bamboula are Egyptianizing in style. See also Reyes 1994: 82-83.

[39] Ernest Renan's assistant Gaillardot had wrongly thought that the statuary was sculpted in the white limestone of Amrith (see Jourdain-Annequin 1993: 72). Reyes (1994: 149-150) mentions no export of Cypriot statuary to Amrith.

Another common datum at both Bostan esh-Sheikh (Phase 2) and the *Ma'abed* at Amrith is statuary in secondary contexts. For the second site, it was suggested that some statues could represent votaries carrying gifts, others "temple boys" (one clearly dedicated to Eshmun 'in the source of Ydlal': Dunand 1970: plate 1a; **PLATE 2b**), and another of a standing, draped figure offered to the god Eshmun (Dunand 1970: plate 1c); the largest statues showing a personage draped in a lion's skin and brandishing a club represent Melqart-Heracles (**PLATE 1d**), an identification which depends on iconographic representations from elsewhere.[40]

The occurrence of water in all three sites, and statuary in two, reinforces the impression that we are dealing with similar activities, *some* of which are dedicated to Phoenician gods. A religious explanation can be put forward to account for the material remains, but I think that the argument could be strengthened by a consideration of two motifs occurring on the aedicules at Aïn el-Hayât and the *Ma'abed*. I am referring to the winged disc and serpents, both Egyptian symbols of divinity and royalty in their own right.[41] By the New Kingdom (1550-1069 BC) the winged sun-disc with *uraei* became a symbol of protection to be found on temple ceilings and ceremonial portals (*DEA*: 305). The winged disc was adopted in many different areas of the Levant and not least by the Phoenicians.[42] The form of the motif

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[40] The most secure identification of the god Melqart comes from the Aleppo Stela dated, with reservations, to 800 BC (Dunand 1939; Bonnet 1988: 132-136, fig. 6). A male personage is depicted striding forward, dressed in a tunic and wearing a cap, holding an axe which rests on his shoulder. Underneath is a dedicatory inscription in Aramean which mentions Melqart. The lion is usually associated with Heracles after the sixth century BC in Syria-Palestine, and became also part of Melqart's iconography when the two gods were assimilated (Bonnet 1988: 409-415; Jourdain-Annequin 1993).

[41] In Egypt, the image of the solar disc with the wings of a hawk was originally the symbol of the god Horus of Behdet in the eastern Delta (*DAE*: 305). It came to be associated with the king as sun-god, symbolising royalty and protection (Gardiner 1944: 46-52). Sacred cobras or *uraei*, the image of kingship par excellence (*DAE*: 302-303), were added on either side of the disc during the Old Kingdom.

[42] Canaanites, Hittites, Assyrians, Persians, Phoenicians and Israelites all adopted the motif in their artistic production, which invariably appears to be connected with divinity or royalty. Recent work on Syrian glyptic suggests that Egyptian motifs, including the winged disc, were adopted in Western Asia during the Egyptian Middle Kingdom, perhaps through Byblos (see Frankfort 1996: 431 n. 15). On the Neo-Assyrian use of the winged disc, see Dalley's study (1986) where the author argues that the motif, to be identified with the god Salmu, was a symbol on which oaths of loyalty were sworn to the king. On the Persian use of the disc as a symbol of the supreme deity there is a reference in Porada (1962: 158). Frankfort (1996: 391 n. 15) notes the use of winged discs in Syria and points out that the Hittites rendered the wings with curled-up tips. Markoe (1990: 22) has argued that the winged sun-disc on a

is similar to Egyptian prototypes although changes can be detected over time (Parayre 1990). We obviously *cannot* assume that the motif had the same meaning for the Egyptians and the Phoenicians. However, its occurrence on certain Phoenician ritual scenes contemporary with our monuments at Amrith suggests that it did in fact carry a religious meaning, that, as William Culican would say, 'it seems hardly likely to be meaningless decoration' (1976: 52). Here I have in mind the stela of Yehawmilk from Byblos, dated to the fifth or early fourth century BC (*CIS* I: 1; *ANEP*: 305, fig. 477; Dunand 1941) (**PLATE 6a**). A personage is shown sitting upon a throne with her feet on a stone, holding a scepter in her left hand; the right hand is upraised in a gesture of blessing. She is depicted with the headdress of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, which suggests she is a deity, probably the Lady of Byblos mentioned in the accompanying inscription. She is approached by another personage wearing a conical headdress, presumably Yehawmilk, king of Byblos. His right hand is upraised in a gesture which implies adoration or respect; his left hand holds a bowl, which he is offering to the seated personage (*ANEP*: 305). The winged disc is placed prominently above. I take the scene to be a record of expressive action of a religious nature and that the personage on the left is indeed the object of reverence. Our reading of the scene is corroborated by its context: the writing on the stela commemorates a portico with a winged disc which Yehawmilk built for the Lady of Byblos.[43] The prominence of the winged disc and its association with a ritual scene, marks the motif out as something important. In one case, admittedly older, it clearly implies divine protection. I have in mind the representation of the winged sun-disc on a Phoenician gold-plated silver bowl from Praeneste in Etruria dated to the end of the eighth century BC or the beginning of the next (Markoe 1985: E2, 189-191, 279-283) (**PLATE 8a**); a duplicate

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Late Bronze Age Canaanite ivory plaque from Megiddo provides a celestial setting to the scene. For the use of the sun-disc in ivory work of North Syria and Phoenicia, see Winter's contribution (1976: 4-5). The most comprehensive treatment of the use of the motif in glyptic art in the whole of the Levant between the ninth and sixth centuries BC, is by Parayre (1990).

[43] The word for the winged disc (*'dt*) occurs in the fourth letter in the fifth group forming a word in line six (Yeivin 1974: 18-19). Dunand (1941) was of the opinion that the portico mentioned in the inscription should be identified with the remains of a threshold slab identified during the excavations at Byblos. This suggestion was taken up and corroborated by Wagner (1980: 16-26); see also Gubel 1986: 272-273. A comparable scene occurs on a terracotta plaque of unknown provenance, now in the Louvre (Gubel 1986) (**PLATE 6b**). The scene is set between two Ionic columns surmounted by an entablature showing a winged disc with a pair of *uraei*. Here the seated personage shown holding a bird is much bigger than the other one standing with plate in hand. The disparity in size and solemn

is known from Kourion in Cyprus (Markoe 1985: Cy7). The pictorial narrative in nine consecutive scenes tells the story of a prince who leaves his walled city to go hunting (1985: 280). He shoots a stag (**PLATE 8b**), flays it and makes an offering. Above the offering scene soars the winged sun-disc (**PLATE 9a**). A gorilla creeps up to steal the offering and attacks the prince. Here, the winged sun-disc undergoes metamorphosis (**PLATE 9b**): the disc turns into a head with the typical curls of the Egyptian goddess Hathor and a pair of arms reach out to protect the prince and his chariot (1985: 282). Aided by a falcon he defeats the gorilla and returns to the city.[44] Conscious of the fact that any particular symbol need not have a finite meaning (Hodder 1992: 11-23), we can take the winged sun-disc to be a symbol of particular religious significance *for the Phoenicians* in about the fifth century BC. The evidence presented here can be augmented by other references to depictions of the winged disc on seals[45] and sculpted limestone blocks (*cippi*) or terracottas assumed to be representations of shrines or *naiskoi*.[46] But for our purposes here it will suffice to have shown clearly *why* the winged disc can be taken to represent a religious symbol. Having established this point, we can propose that the winged discs at Aïn el-Hayât and the *Ma'abed* respectively, together with the *uraei* at the former site, carry a religious meaning too. Seen in the context of the other data discussed earlier, especially the occurrence of statuary, our proposition for seeing religious complexes here is certainly justified.

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gestures suggest that the seated personage is a deity, and that the whole composition records a religious ritual.

[44] Barnett (1969: 12) suggests that the prince is in fact Melqart because he is brandishing the same fenestrated axe and wearing the high hat which appears on the Aleppo stele of Melqart (*ANEP*: 499). Bonnet (1988: 135-136) cautions us in equating the axe with Melqart because of its long history in Levantine iconography.

[45] A good example is an amethyst sealstone thought to come from Sidon where a winged disk soars above a ritual scene showing two personages (**PLATE 7a**: Parrot *et al.* 1976: fig. 115): the one on the right is seated in a throne flanked with sphinxes, holds a sceptre and raises her right hand; the one on the left is seen standing and has both hands lifted. An incense burner fills the space between both figures. Note that the same sealstone is reproduced as a mirror image in S. Brown (1991: 305 fig. 63d). See also Culican 1962b: plates 1, 2. On the sphinx-thrones, see below.

[46] I have in mind the two sculpted stones from Sidon (preserved in the Louvre and Istanbul respectively) studied by Aimé-Giron (1934: 38-42) and interpreted by him as *naiskoi* or shrines, for a throne (**FIGURE 28, PLATE 10**). The cornice is decorated with the winged sun-disc and surmounted by a frieze of *uraei*. A similar example from a private collection, but certain to have come from Sidon, was published by Dunand (1926a: 126-127). I will discuss these limestone and terracotta shrines below.

The disc with *uraei* turns up in another site, Kharayeb (**3.2.2**), sculpted in relief on a fragmented door lintel (**FIGURE 18b**).[47] Located in the Litani valley between Tyre and Sarepta, excavations produced a vast collection of terracotta statuettes from an alleged *favissa*. The plan of the building was not recovered in its entirety so the case for Kharayeb being the site of a religious complex rests mainly upon a consideration of the statuary. Having established that the winged disc with *uraei* had a religious meaning for the Phoenicians at two other sites roughly contemporary with Kharayeb's Phase 1, more weight can be given to the proposition that the figurine deposit is a ritual cache. Our argument can be augmented when Kharayeb is placed in a wider context. These terracottas have parallels at sites dated to the Persian period throughout the Levant. Stern (1982: 158-182) has listed the main types prevalent in an area corresponding to modern-day Israel, several of which belong to types found at Kharayeb.[48] He noted that the terracotta statuettes and figurines he lists (1982: 158-160) all came from pits or *favissae*; besides the exceptional case of Makmish,[49] none came from sanctuaries. Stern linked the Palestinian finds with those from the Phoenician coast, and inferred that sanctuaries must have existed at those Palestinian sites at which similar assemblages were found

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[47] The excavator assumed that the wings would have been painted on the stone (Kaoukabani 1973: 56 plate 18.2).

[48] These include the terracotta statuettes from Layer II representing a woman with a tambourine (Chébab 1951-1952: 155; 1953-1954: plate 1.4), the pregnant woman (Kaoukabani 1973: plate 7.4, plate 8.2), the woman pressing her breasts (Kaoukabani 1973: plate 7.1-3), the chariot and horse riders (Kaoukabani 1973: plates 12, 13.1). A mixture of Egyptian (kilt/*shenti*: Kaoukabani 1973: plate 16.1-2; *atef* crown - Kaoukabani 1973: plates 10.4, 14.3; lotus stem - Kaoukabani 1973: plate 11.1-3) and Phoenician/Persian dress and iconographic motifs (pointed hat: Kaoukabani 1973: plate 15.2-3) is prevalent.

[49] Makmish is located on the coast about 6.5 km. north of the Yarkon River estuary. The settlement remains in this area are dispersed over five hills, the main tell corresponding to Tel Michal (Herzog *et al.* 1989). The northeastern hillock corresponds to Makmish where excavations by Nahman Avigad between 1958-1960 uncovered a large building dating to the Persian period and identified with a sanctuary (Avigad 1993: 932-934). The plan of the building could not be established and the layout is known only through preliminary descriptions and a photograph (1993: 932). Clay figurines were recovered from within the building and from outside it. They include representations of seated men wearing pointed headgear (the Egyptian atef crown) and fondling the end of a long beard, and seated pregnant women (Avigad 1993: 933); both have exact parallels at Kharayeb. Avigad assumed that these figurines and statuettes, which he dated to the fifth-fourth centuries BC, were offerings brought to the place of worship. A potsherd inscribed with the name of the god Baal-shamem, Lord of the Heavens, was lifted from the surface of the mound in 1987 (Rainey 1989). For Brody (1996: 97) this is evidence that a patron deity of sailors was worshipped here. A discussion of the remains is included in Stern (1982: 61, fig. 69), who notes that the orientation of the alleged temple were S-N. Makmish is not included in Wright's survey of possible temples in South Syria and Palestine (1985: 216-225).

(1985: 158). We *cannot* take Stern's statuary from Palestine to prove the ritual nature of the statuary from Phoenicia, since it is a circular argument.

Statuary types which occur at Kharayeb (Phase 1) have parallels at Amrith and Sarepta. Those from Amrith consist of two limestone statues wearing an Egyptian kilt.[50] Since the findspot of the statuary from Amrith is secondary, any date spanning the period 600-350 BC is possible; a date in the sixth century is, however, likely because it corresponds to the period when sculptors in Cyprus were adopting Egyptianizing styles popular in Phoenicia (Markoe 1990). From Sarepta, the excavators lifted terracotta statuettes showing a seated pregnant woman,[51] a tambourine player,[52] and a woman pressing her breasts.[53] The findspot of the latter type is clear and dated to about 600-400 BC, or Kharayeb's Phase 1. The seated pregnant woman statuettes from the room immediately north of Shrine 1 at Sarepta, were assigned to a level dated to about 800-600 BC,[54] preceding Kharayeb's Layer II, therefore, by at least 200 years. On the basis of this and other evidence,[55] and assuming that these statuettes were not heirlooms, it seems that activity at Kharayeb started earlier than 400 BC and that this gap should be narrowed. It would be tempting to propose that Layer II should be dated *at least* to about 600 BC, when Sarepta's Shrine 1 was abandoned.

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[50] Kharayeb: Kaoukabani 1973: plate 16.1-2 = Amrith: Dunand 1944-1945: plate 16.6.

[51] Sarepta: Pritchard 1975: fig. 46.1 = Kharayeb: Chébab 1951-1952: Kh. 6, p. 19; 1953-1954: plate 2.1 Kaoukabani 1973: fig. 7.4.

[52] Sarepta: Pritchard 1975: fig. 42.2 = Kharayeb: Chébab 1951-1952: Kh. 5, p. 19; 1953-1954: plate 1.4.

[53] Sarepta: Pritchard 1975: fig. 46.3 = Kharayeb: Kaoukabani 1973: fig. 7.1.

[54] See discussion in **3.2.5** above.

[55] Similar statuary to that recovered from Kharayeb and Sarepta occurs at the cemetries at Achzib on the Phoenician coast, north of Mount Carmel. A mould-made terracotta figurine of a seated pregnant woman was dated to the sixth century BC (Prausnitz & Mazar 1993: caption to figure on p. 33 (also Prausnitz 1960: 262 - dated to 'early Persian contexts'), revising an earlier fourth-century date in Prausnitz 1959: 271). Figurines of warriors on horseback (which are similar to an example from Kharayeb: Kaoukabani 1973: plate 13.1) and a tambourine player from the southern cemetery (seen in the photo reproduced in Prausnitz & Mazar 1993: 34) have been dated to the eighth-seventh centuries BC on the basis of the accompanying pottery (see also Prausnitz 1960: 261 for a date in the 'first decades of the eighth century'). A terracotta tambourine player with thick hair coils also occurs at Tyre, Stratum II (about 740-700 BC) (Bikai 1978: plate 81.2). The occurrence of these statuettes in a funerary context implies a degree of similarity between the rituals of the living and the dead.

The choice of similar types of statuary from Sarepta and Kharayeb, associated with the sun-disc is sufficient evidence to conclude that Kharayeb was a religious site before, and during, the Persian period.

I have left the alleged religious remains at Tell Sukas (Periods G^2, G^1 and F) last in view of what was discussed earlier (**4.2.1.**) regarding the disputed identity of the settlers at the site, and our conclusion that it is difficult to see a religious building in Period G^3. For Period G^2 (about 588-552 BC), the building from the preceding phase was enlarged keeping the rectangular long-room layout and the same orientation (**FIGURE 8**). Two Doric columns were placed *in antis* at the entrance. The interior space was divided into three areas. The excavator implicitly assumed the temple to be "Greek" without providing parallels. In CHAPTER III we concluded that if the site was taken in isolation only a weak case could be made to defend the sacred nature of the remains, and that given the general lack of finds from its floors the case rests upon a consideration of the plan. Unfortunately, from the coastal plain of Phoenicia during this period no sites are available for comparison other than the Phase 1 structural remains at Bostan esh-Sheikh which in themselves are too limited to conclude anything from them. Aaron Brody has argued that the tripartite layout of the Period G^2 temple at Tell Sukas recalls parallels which are non-Hellenic: Tell Ta'ayinat and 'Ain Dara, 'and the descriptions of the Solomonic temple, built for the Israelites by Phoenician craftsmen' (1996: 90-91). In view of what has been discussed above, the assumption that 'non-Hellenic' should imply "Phoenician" does not follow, and the label "North Syrian" would be more appropriate in this context.

For Period G^1 (*c.* 552-498 BC), we concluded in CHAPTER III that it is difficult to defend the religious nature of the remains because of a lack of finds. Besides, I fail to see anything Phoenician here and the reference to 'sherds of a local red burnished vase of Early Iron Age type' (Riis 1970: 64) adds to the ambiguity and is hardly sufficient to prove Phoenician occupation here at this time. One thing is worth noting, however, and that is that the dimensions of the main structure consisting of a small room open at one end are similar to the 'altar enclosure' from Mina Sukas (**3.1.3.2**), the site across the Southern Harbour from the main tell (**FIGURES 7a, 10**). But this is

dated to a later period (F), separated by more than 100 years during which Sukas seems to have been abandoned. It is during this period, however, that the excavator of Sukas identifies a Neo-Phoenician phase in the history of the site. Despite a certain overlap with the Persian period during Period G[1], it is with Period F (*c.* 380-140 BC) that we have clear evidence for similarities in material culture that bring Sukas into a "Persian *koine*" identified by Stern (1982) for Palestine. A new building technique involving the use of ashlar masonry laid in a header-and-stretcher fashion, which Stern (1977) calls "Phoenician", appears at Kharayeb and Tell Sukas. Remains at Tell Sukas and Mina Sukas have been identified with religious buildings for Period F.

At Tell Sukas (Period F), the excavator identified a rectangular area paved with large stone slabs as a room or enclosure of particular importance. Although he noted that the remains unearthed were so insignificant that an interpretation had to ambiguous (Riis 1970: 122), he pressed on to draw parallels for the layout with the temple complex at Late Bronze Age Lachish (which has a similar row of stones for roof supports) and the Resheph temple at Byblos (which had a central room paved with stone slabs). But, in my opinion seeking analogies between monuments separated by more about a thousand years in the first case and about two thousand years in the second, is hazardous to say the least. The plan, of which less than half survives, does not look like anything discussed so far, while the Silenus figure is clearly Greek not Phoenician; as such, the nature of the remains would best be left undecided.

Mina Sukas presents better data to argue a case for a religious complex here. The retrieval of statue fragments from Floor I (*c.* 380-225 BC) of the enclosure was earlier taken to indicate activity of a religious nature. When the site is considered with the nearby, but older, *Ma'abed* at Amrith, the case is very much stronger. Comparison between both sites is prompted by the occurrence of statuary and architectural fragments (merlons or crowsteps) at Mina Sukas which find parallels at Amrith. One class of statuette (the "Temple Boy") finds a parallel at Bostan esh-Sheikh (Phase 2). The context of discovery at Mina Sukas is a small 'chapel' which would have been crowned by merlons, and an 'altar enclosure' with dimensions similar to the *naos* at the *Ma'abed*; the orientation, however, is different. Again, the degree of contact

between Mina Sukas and other sites to the south in Phoenicia cannot be established because the Persian-period and Hellenistic remains at Sarepta have not been published, while those at Tyre were not identified.

4.2.3 The Hellenistic Period.

The end of the Persian hold on Phoenicia and the Levant coincides with the defeat of the Persian fleet, composed largely of Phoenician ships, at Issos in 331 BC at the hands of the Macedonians led by Alexander the Great. The course of events is seen through eyes foreign to Phoenicia, as narrated by the ancient historians Diodorus and Arrian; these need not be rehearsed in detail here. What interests us instead, is the 'emancipat[ion] of the Phoenicians of the Hellenistic period', as John Grainger (1991: 187) puts it, through a study of the material culture itself, more specifically the religious buildings.[56] These include the sites at Bostan esh-Sheikh (Phase 3), Oumm el-'Amed, and Kharayeb (Phase 2).

At Bostan esh-Sheikh, Dunand dated some remains to the Hellenistic Period (Phase 3). We have noted that without reference to other sites it is difficult to find a religious function for the remains. For our discussion, the most relevant datum is the rectangular area denoted Astarte's Chapel with a stone throne at the south end (**PLATE 2a**).[57] A similar throne occurs at the Throne Chapel in the Eastern Temple at Oumm el-'Amed. Analogies between both sites, and others on the Phoenician coast, can be sought on the basis of shared symbols in the iconography and the occurrence of similar statuary: the winged sun-disc identified with a Phoenician religious symbol occurs prominently at Oumm el-'Amed on door lintels and stelae, while some statuary belongs to a type that occurs at the *favissae* at Amrith and Kharayeb. The throne flanked by a pair of sphinxes is a favourite motif in Phoenician and Punic art (Gubel 1987: 37-240; Markoe 1990: 19-22). The thrones from Bostan esh-Sheikh and Oumm

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[56] The Hellenisation of Phoenicia and the Phoenicians was the subject of a fine article by Fergus Millar (1983). John Grainger (1991) wrote a thorough account, combining literary and archaeological evidence.

el-'Amed are similar to the throne depicted on the older Ahiram sarcophagus from Byblos, with a high back and curvilinear arm-rests.[58] The sphinxes are overtly Egyptian, shown with typical crown, headcloth, and pectoral or *uraeus* bib. The style is however, Phoenician, not North Syrian, and the sphinxes on the Oumm el-'Amed throne find a close parallel in an older winged-female sphinx carved in ivory found at Fort Shalmaneser in Nimrud (Winter 1976: 6-7, plate 3a). What is required at this stage is an argument to show that the sphinx-thrones can be used to identify the context where they occur as a religious one. The sphinx falls in the category of fantastic beasts and composite animals which are usually identified with the supernatural and the divine. Renfrew has argued (1985: 23-24) that when such animals are shown flanking an anthropomorphic personage, it is plausible to infer that that being has divine status. Winter herself has argued that the sphinx motif in Phoenician ivory carving 'must have had symbolic significance beyond its decorative function' (1976: 8). But the problem with sphinx-thrones in Phoenician contexts is that they appear to have served also as seats for human beings of apparently royal status, a tradition which is adapted from Egypt and is a continuation from earlier Canaanite times.[59] Such is the case with the Ahiram sarcophagus which depicts a person, taken to be the Byblian king, seated on a sphinx-throne, and attended by votaries in procession. According to Porada (1973: 363) the sphinx-throne and accompanying lion supports on the sarcophagus elevated the deceased to a "superhuman" status. But even if the foregoing suggests a certain ambiguity, other evidence indicates that the sphinx-thrones had religious associations.[60] The literature

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[57] A reference to two unpublished small thrones from Bostan esh-Sheikh is made by Soyez (1972: 157 n. 3).

[58] Unfortunately the dimensions of the thrones are not known in detail. Only the restored height of the throne at Oumm el-'Amed is available, as 0.95 m. (Dunand & Duru 1962: 132).

[59] The evidence comes mainly from an incised ivory plaque from Late Bronze Age Megiddo which depicts a procession of worshippers approaching a king seated on a sphinx-throne (Markoe 1990: fig. 8). In an interesting note Barnett (1969: 7) argues that there is no clear evidence available to show that the Phoenician king was regarded as a god in the full sense, with one exception: this is a reference in Ezekiel's lament against Tyre (Ezekiel 28: 4) where the prophet mocks, denounces and dooms with his curse the king of Tyre for identifying himself with his own god; the sphinx symbolises the king's might. Barnett suggests that the god is Melqart symbolically represented as a sphinx. See also Ciafaloni 1995: 544.

[60] The occurrence of thrones in the history of the ancient Near East was the subject of an article by de Vaux (1961) who provided a useful list of sphinx-thrones in the Phoenician East and West. This has been updated by Gubel (1987: 37-84).

on this subject is vast and for this purpose it is sufficient to sketch the outline, and to highlight those aspects where the evidence from our sites offers some new insights.[61]

Mettinger (1995: 100-103) has summarised the information regarding the types of thrones that occur in Phoenicia.[62] Following others, he argues that the *empty* thrones were the objects of adoration: 'this is [...] empty-space aniconism where the throne is the seat of the invisibly present deity.'[63] But in other cases, it is clear that the throne held a spherical object. On some Roman coins issued in the reign of Aurelius Antoninus (Elagabalus; AD 218-222) by Sidon, the spherical object is placed in a four-columned canopy with wheels, crowned by an architrave decorated, in one case, by a disc and *uraei* (**FIGURES 29d, e**). The spherical object rests on a podium or is supported by two figures which can be taken to be stylized sphinxes (Mettinger 1995: 104). The numismatist G. F. Hill thought these represented portable shrines for the baetyl (Hill 1911: 61, plate 3.17-19);[64] Ronzevalle (1932) thought this was the 'Astarte chariot' and that the cultic object was a solar globe. A similar set-up is recalled by two stone blocks or *cippi*,[65] apparently from Sidon, taken to be models of *naiskoi* or shrines (Aimé-Giron 1934). Here a throne is seen in front elevation, flanked by something which, with due reservations given the low relief, can be identified with sphinxes (**FIGURE 28, PLATE 10**).[66] Both examples have tenons or cavities set in the throne, to receive, according to some (e.g. Falsone 1993: 256), the missing sphere.

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[61] See Aimé-Giron (1934), Soyez (1972), Chiera (1982), Amadasi Guzzo (1993a), Falsone (1995: 255-256).

[62] One example from Khirbet et-Taybeh near Tyre has two pillars carved in relief on the back of the throne. The dedication to Astarte inscribed on the throne, and dated to the third-second centuries BC, has suggested to many that these thrones are votive in nature and associated with the goddess Astarte (Danthine 1939; Lipinski 1995a: 136-137; *DCPP*: fig. 366). Other thrones are also known: a small bronze throne ("Seyrig throne"), 0.06 or 0.07 m. high, contains a spherical object (Seyrig 1959: 48-51, No. 1, plate 10.3, 10.5; Falsone 1993: fig. 6a; this was bought in the Beirut antiquities market); another one from Sidon is empty (Seyrig 1959: 52, No. 1; de Vaux 1961: plate 5.2) and is dated to the year 59/60 AD on the basis of the Greek inscription on it. Recently, Honor Frost (1995: 17) has refered to 'Astarte-type rock-cut thrones' at Phalaserna on the westernmost tip of Crete; on one of the back-rests a standing stone, a baetyl, is carved in relief (figs 22, 23). Frost argues that these thrones suggest a Phoenician presence and involvement in this part of Crete, but gives no dates.

[63] Culican (1976: 53) had suggested that certain terracotta models of shrines were deliberately empty. Also Stockton (1974-1975/2: 9-10) about 'sacred emptiness'.

[64] See also Price & Trell 1977: fig. 460.

[65] *Cippus* (Italian *cippo*, plural *cippi*) is the designation given by Tore (1989a; 1992b: 178) to a worked block of stone (a parallelepiped) with its height larger than the width; see also Mettinger 1995: 35.

[66] A similar representation occurs on a stela from the tophet in Motya in Sicily (Falsone 1993: 257, plate 020).

The reading of the iconography on the coins and the blocks is enhanced when the two thrones from Oumm el-'Amed and Bostan esh-Sheikh are brought into the discussion.

At Oumm el-'Amed no spherical objects were recovered alongside the throne. The seat is not inclined and the throne is clearly empty. But it is the archaeological context of this throne – so far largely unnoticed by archaeologists – that gives it meaning: the throne was placed above a stone podium in axis with the monumental doorway decorated with a winged sun-disc and *uraei* (above **3.2.5, FIGURES 26, 27**). Viewed when standing outside the doorway, the elevation immediately brings to mind the many representations in terracotta and stone taken to be shrines, including the examples from Sidon mentioned above. I propose that at Oumm el-'Amed those representations can actually be seen in full-scale,[67] and that the object of attention has survived: the sphinx-throne.[68] The winged sun-disc flanked with *uraei* is placed prominently at the entrance to the room. On another lintel the same religious symbol is approached by personages holding a sceptre, probably the Egyptian ram-headed Khnum sceptre (**FIGURE 25**).[69] On the decorated stone block from Sidon (**FIGURE 28a**), the same personages are approaching the throne, while on a Phoenician seal from Tharros in Sardinia, they are shown moving towards a figure seated on a sphinx-throne placed inside a canopy crowned by winged sun-discs and *uraei* (Culican 1968: 65, fig. 4; *I Fenici 1988*: 516) (**PLATE 7b**). The religious reading of these scenes springs from the repetition of the symbols (winged sun-disc, *uraei*) employed alongside an expressive gesture (the raised hand holding the sceptre). The sphinx-throne has to be seen in this wider context, in association with other symbols of a religious nature. The argument can be augmented by reference to the terracotta figurines, probably votive offerings, found on the floor of the same room, for which parallels exist in the Hellenistic stratum of Kharayeb (Phase 2/Layer I; below). Taken together these observations lead to the conclusion that the room is indeed a religious

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[67] Another set-up which recalls pictorial representations on stelae may be that at Kommos (see below).

[68] The excavators of Oumm el-'Amed thought it impossible to reconstruct a *naos* or canopy above the podium using the large block (lintel?) found lying on top of it (Dunand & Duru 1962: 67-69). I suggest that there is no need for such a reconstruction. Also note that the podium with a flight of five steps on one side recalls the podia at Aïn el-Hayât as recorded by Renan (**3.1.1**).

[69] For a detailed study of the Khnum sceptre and its adoption in Phoenician art, see Culican (1968: 62-73; 1970: 28-31). He argues that this sceptre formed an important part of Phoenician liturgy, 'a kind of blessing apparatus'.

building, a chapel. The conclusion is not dissimilar from that proposed by Dunand and Duru (1962) but the method of inference here is laid out clearly.

When the sphinx-throne at Bostan esh-Sheikh is added to the discussion, a pattern emerges whereby two sites on the Phoenician coast share a common religious symbolism. Even here the throne was found empty, set on a Egyptianizing plinth flanked by a pair of lions. It is tempting to link the stone urns found within the rectangular enclosure or pool with the throne as Brigette Soyez has done, following the scheme of the miniature example published by Seyrig. But their archaeological context makes this connection doubtful, at least for an initial phase when the rectangular enclosure functioned as a pool and before Greek influence was becoming manifest at Bostan esh-Sheikh.[70]

I will now return for a moment to Oumm el-'Amed, in particular to the main monuments inside the courtyards. In a previous chapter we noted that hardly anything survives of the elevation, but that their prominent location is suggestive of buildings of importance. Comparisons with other sites on the Phoenician coast cannot be made because these monuments are unique; indeed, unlike Dunand and Duru (1962: 235) I fail to see any similarities between the buildings here and the alleged temples of Byblos older by more than 1500 years. The plans of the podia are not particularly enlightening either. Although I agree with Grainger (1991: 81-82) – and Corbett (1982: 88) before him – that Oumm el-'Amed displays no Hellenization, in so far as language and pottery go,[71] he skirts the issue when he says that 'the buildings show no

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[70] Brigitte Soyez who has compiled a catalogue of the "urns" retrieved from what she describes as the pool of Astarte 'ou des ses abords immédiats', follows Dunand (1971: 23-24) and suggests that the urns should be connected to a cult of Astarte (1972: 159-161, 164-168, plates 3-6); one of these urns (0.345 m. high) would have been set inside the throne as suggested by the miniature example published by Seyrig and the Roman coins of the second century AD. But to argue for a connection between the throne and the urns for an early phase in the Hellenistic period lacks foundation. Dunand is very clear that nothing was found in a layer 0.75 m. thick above the floor of the pool (1972: 21); the urns, dated by their Greek dedications to Asclepius to the second century AD, and the Greek statues of atheletes recovered from above this sterile layer, suggest a second phase of use of this area when Greek influence was at work. This of course does not necessarily prove that thrones and spheres could not be found in association at an earlier date: the Punic throne *cippi* from tophets in Carthage, Motya and Tharros suggest otherwise; see Falsone 1993: 253-255, fig. 5; the available data from the Levant; however, suggest that this practice lingered well into the Roman period.

[71] On the contrary the Phoenicians along the coastal plain of Akko and the Hula Valley in the Tryian hinterland were apparently resisting this Hellenization by the adoption of a local semi-fine ware. This

sign of being other than the traditional Phoenician type, in so far as that existed'. His statement is, of course, not noted because evidence from elsewhere is lacking. If we are really forced to seek antecedents to a religious building set in the middle of a space surrounded by porticos or buildings then there is no need to look to Syria or Egypt, because the older *Ma'abed* at Amrith would fall in this category, and the orientation is with the cardinal points too; but then at Oumm el-'Amed water is not the dominant feature, so perhaps the analogy is not a good one. As argued earlier, the only datum we have to propose a religious function for the Eastern Temple at Oumm el-'Amed will have to consist of the repetition of the religious symbol (wings, disc and *uraei*) sculpted prominently on the lintels of various thresholds: the lateral entrance of the podium, the Throne Chapel and the courtyard. For the Temple of Milk'ashtart, the dedication on a statue found in a primary context outside the main entrance to the complex, is an important datum explained best by assigning to it a religious function. Its stylistic similarities to a statue from the cache at Amrith[72] argues for a certain degree of continuity and overlap in the method of artistic and symbolic expression on the Phoenician coast.

Kharayeb, on the coastal hills flanking the mouth of the Litani valley, underwent changes in what the excavators identified as the Hellenistic phase, opening out to the "world". While the pottery reported is a local Phoenician ware with shapes that occur at contemporary Oumm el-'Amed to the south,[73] the statuary is essentially Greek both in style and iconography (**PLATES 4-5**), and Culican has pointed out that 'the moulds for making Greek type terracottas [...] remain unpublished'. Scale is not a helpful criterion to differentiate between cult image and votaries, but Maurice

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is the argument of Berlin (1997) who suggests that the limited distribution of this ware found also at Oumm el-'Amed, indicates the need to retain a "Phoenician" identity at a time when the same cultural identity could not be taken for granted.

[72] Amrith: Dunand 1944-1945: plate 17.12 = Oumm el-'Amed: Dunand & Duru 1962: E.436, plate 30.1

[73] The shapes conform to the semi-fine wares identified in a recent study (Berlin 1997: fig. 2) as typically Phoenician of the Hellenistic period, and probably produced at Tyre (above). The shapes at Kharayeb include the juglet and table jug (Kharayeb: Chébab 1951-1952: fig. 2.1-4 = Oumm el-'Amed: Dunand & Duru 1962: fig. 79) and phials or unguentaria (Chébab 1951-1952: fig. 2.7-10 = Dunand & Duru 1962: fig. 80.b-e), while an amphoriskos with ribbed surface is depicted in a terracotta figurine carried on the shoulder (Chébab 1953-1954: plate 99.3). Berlin does not mention Kharayeb in his study, but judging from the drawn and photographed examples from Kharayeb reproduced in

Chébab was able to identify the Greek divinities. It is difficult to argue as to the processes whereby iconographic types of the earlier Persian period became popular with passing Greeks, but as Serge Lancel (1995a: 343) contemplates in a different context, the 'acclimatization of the iconography of Silenus and the satyr' could have benefitted 'from the ubiquity, in the Punic cultural world, of the god Bes, whose powers and shape are so close to those of the satyrs and Silenus' (**PLATE 4d**). Divinities apart, some statuettes clearly depict votaries carrying objects, presumably gifts: fowl and agricultural produce are both included (**PLATE 5b, c**). Then there are musicians and dancers: the tambourine survives from the previous Persian phase but wind and string instruments are added.[74] The taste for loose-fitting tunics survives too as can be seen on the figurines depicting votaries, perhaps priests, holding incense bowls (**PLATE 5a**); again, the parallels with Oumm el-'Amed are striking and there one personage commemorated on the stela was taken to be the priest of the deity Milk'ashtart (**PLATE 16a**).[75] But the static posture and rigid hieratic style characteristic of the earlier phase disappears from the majority of the statuary, and instead a living quality and a freedom of movement which is essentially a Hellenic novelty appears.[76] Besides the pottery, Kharayeb shares the Egyptianizing motif of the disk flanked by *uraei* with Oumm el-'Amed, and even here it crowned an entrance; it is safe to assume that the symbolic significance of this motif was shared too.

The last site to be considered is the grotto at Wasta. A case for Wasta being a religious site rests upon the dedicatory inscriptions and the symbolism revealed on the walls within. Unfortunately, there are no other sites that look remotely like this grotto. Of the iconography employed the palm frond, or tree, is clearly seen alongside the 'Astarte chariot' on the second-century AD coins from Sidon (Hill 1911: plate 3.17-19) (**FIGURES 29d, e**). Religious meaning can be attached to the tree on the basis that it is associated with the disc and *uraei* elsewhere shown to occur in religious contexts. But the most compelling evidence for the use of the upturned triangles accompanied

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Chébab's catalogue (1953-1954: plates 94, 95), the fabric of the pottery appears similar. Also note that the tripod bowls in basalt belong to a Phoenician ceramic type popular in the West (Culican 1970).

[74] The tambourine players are reproduced in Chébab 1953-1954: 44.1-2; the lyre players: plate 40.2-3; the pan-pipe players: plates 44.3-46; a *chitare* player: plate 41.3.

[75] Kharayeb: Chébab 1951-1952: Kh. 90-94, 23; 1953-1954: plates 9, 10.1-2 = Oumm el-'Amed: Dunand & Duru 1962: 161, 187, Inscription No. 6, plate 79.3.

by a stylized branch, tree or palm frond, occurs a thousand years earlier on Late Bronze Age sheet metal plaque pendants (Beaulieu & Mouterde 1947-1948: 18). Ruth Hestrin (1987, 1991) who has studied the occurrence of these motifs has suggested that the association of trees and pubic triangles with a figure who wears the wig of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, would suggest that these were life-giving symbols, to be associated with the Canaanite goddess Asherah. To claim continuity in the meaning of the symbols over a span of a thousand years might appear hazardous; yet the similarities are striking and a tendency towards schematization where the human outline is reduced to signs is noted, and the dedication to Aphrodite above an inverted triangle, would suggest that the symbol was familiar to passing Greeks. Wasta remains a singular case, however, apparently visited by different people writing their dedications in Greek not Phoenician. For the moment, Grainger's (1991: 78) supposition that the beliefs expressed here are of the popular sort, has to remain the most plausible working hypothesis.

4.2.4 Concluding remarks

It is now possible to return to some of the questions posed at the end of CHAPTER II, in order to assess the extent to which they have been answered. The picture which arises from this survey is a variegated one, where no two sites are exactly similar. Yet a level of 'Phoenician religious space' can be discerned in subtleties that transcend generalities; in other words, a pattern is apparent. The 'space' I talk about here is 'existential' and 'architectural': it is lived space, experienced and created, that channels movement through thresholds and along boundaries (Tilley 1994: 14-17; Parker Pearson & Richards 1994). The organization of this space is dependent on sight, while the objects we perceive inside this space will be commensurate with the size of our body (Tuan 1974: 14; 1977: 16). What follows is not retrospective interpretation, a way of imposing modern views on the past, but responses of the body to the physical environment: space commands bodily movement, it prescribes and proscribes gestures (Lefebvre 1991). It is through such

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[76] See Chébab 1953-1954: plates 36-39.

movements of the human body and analysis of spatial directions that ritual should be best understood (Parkin 1992).

Phoenician religious space varies from a small spatial unit (a chapel) as in the industrial set-up at coastal Sarepta, to a conglomeration of units (a sanctuary) as in the extra-urban complex at Bostan esh-Sheikh in the hinterland of Sidon. The focus of Phoenician ritual inside these spatial units, the shrine, could be placed on a low platform at the end of a deep room as at Sarepta, emphasized by the directional pull of the dominant axis, from the door at the opposite end slightly offset to the right; it could also be housed in a shrine across the water as in the Persian-period monuments at Amrith, or in the Hellenistic shrine with a throne at Bostan esh-Sheikh. At the *Ma'abed* the row of pillars emphasize the centrality of the shrine for worshippers standing on the opposite bank. No steps were found at either locale to suggest that immersion took place as part of the ritual: at these two sites water clearly demarcates space and constitutes a physical and conceptual boundary between the shrine and the worshippers: divinity and mortals are neatly separated.

A roof can be postulated for the chapel at Sarepta: the number of pottery lamps found piled near the shrine suggests that this was the only source of light inside a dark, long room. On the other hand, the shrines at Amrith are set in the open, as is the Hellenistic sphinx throne at Bostan esh-Sheikh: nature, the sky, forms a back-drop.

At Hellenistic Oumm el-'Amed, religious space is demarcated by a boundary wall that cuts it off from the rest of the site: thresholds across the wall are marked by monumental entrances, decorated by religious symbols (the winged-disc, the disc-and-crescent); inside the sacred space, thresholds to smaller religious units, as in the throne chapel at the Eastern Temple, are marked again by the same symbols. For the worshipper, the act of crossing and entering a succession of sacred spaces becomes a persistent engagement with these symbols. Access to the divine is not free and simple, but regulated through thresholds and steps. The climax, in the only case that is apparent, is a sphinx throne, the abode of the deity, placed on a podium opposite the threshold.

At Kharayeb, where the evidence is fragmentary, the religious site was clearly demarcated from the rural surroundings where it flourished in Ptolemaic times. As at Oumm el-'Amed at least one threshold, leading into a temple or chapel, was marked by the disc and *uraei*. Meanwhile, at contemporary Wasta, ritual was carried out in a sacred site in nature, a cave-sanctuary.

A concern with the cardinal points is clear for the Persian-period remains at Bostan esh-Sheikh and Amrith: both the temple podium in the former and the shrine in the latter face North. East, the direction of the rising sun is considered the significant cardinal point at Hellenistic Oumm el-'Amed, while at other sites (Sarepta, and the throne pool at Hellenistic Bostan esh-Sheikh) the orientation is less than 45 degrees on either side of East.

Phoenician religious space in the Persian period blends in with the landscape, is tied to the topography and is attached to the land: the sanctuary or *Ma'abed* at Amrith is essentially carved out of the rock and the shrine is not visible from great distances but on arrival at the site; the podium at Bostan esh-Sheikh is built into the hillside, so despite its monumentality it becomes at one and the same time an extension of the physical landscape. Spring water was a determinant factor in the choice of location: both monuments, as well as the shrines at Aïn el-Hâyat, are built around water; water is channeled through them, before it flows down to the coast. Nature was appropriated, crowned by the building of religious monuments.

By comparison, the Hellenistic sanctuaries at Oumm el-'Amed are erected against, and imposed upon a disordered, industrial background, where a boundary wall is needed to separate sacred from mundane. The architecture dominates the landscape and the natural environment is subdued.

4.3 Cyprus

In our survey of Cyprus three sites were considered as potential religious complexes: Bamboula and Kathari at Larnaca (Kition) on the coast, and Meniko at Litharkes in the interior. The cases made for each individual site by the excavators are strong because the sites were exceptionally rich. Looking for parallels in the Levant for the period which interests us (the first millennium BC), should be possible in theory: contacts between the cities on the Levantine coast and Cyprus started much earlier and the Phoenicians do not enter a vacuum but partake into the island's established Bronze Age contacts, its 'already-prevalent internationalism' (Reyes 1994: 21; also S. Morris 1992: 127-128 and Mederos Martín 1996).[77] In practice, however, the story is more complicated and a caution must be added. The monograph by A. T. Reyes (1994) has shown that as far as the Phoenician data (mostly architecture and sculpture) is concerned, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly the direction in which influences were travelling. Cultural traditions of the Cypro-Archaic period could well be a continuum from the earlier Bronze Age, whence they had been inherited from the Canaanite East, rather than Phoenician (Iron Age) innovations.[78] Having said that, the evidence reviewed in CHAPTER III does lend itself to scrutiny, and some concluding remarks are possible.

All the recent excavators at Kition (Bamboula and Kathari) have argued that the remains they uncovered were Phoenician sanctuaries. It is not always clear, however, what *exactly* was considered "Phoenician" at these sites, and the semitic identity of Kition is assumed on the basis of a large corpus of inscriptions in the Phoenician language and script (*CIS* I; Masson & Sznycer 1972). Vassos Karageorghis identified the remains in Area II at Kathari as Phoenician mainly on the basis of the amount of red-slipped pottery retrieved on the earliest floor of Temple 1, dated to the time when the Bible records the king of Tyre Hiram I suppressing a revolt

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[77] The earliest Phoenician black-on-red pottery in Cyprus is dated to the eleventh century and occurs in corresponding levels at Tyre and Sarepta (Reyes 1994: 18, and references therein); but these do not necessarily imply full-scale settlement which appears two centuries later with the activity at Kition-Kathari. The pottery on the earliest floor of the Astarte Temple includes red-slip ware which is what the Phoenicians take with them to the West.

[78] See Bikai's (1994: 34-35) conclusions.

of the people of Kition (Karageorghis 1976: 95-96); he did *not*, however, identify Temple 1 as Phoenician on the basis of 'the tripartite divisions of the structure, comparable to the plan of Solomon's temple' as Reyes (1994: 128-129) claims. In fact, excluding Temenos B which is really a separate unit attached to the rectangular building (Temple 1), the latter is not divided into three areas along a straight axis, as are the North Syrian temples mentioned earlier. However, Karageorghis' indebtedness to the biblical account is clear in the labels he gives to architectural units, and elsewhere: his insistence, as well as that of others (e.g. Wright 1992a: 523), to see in Temple 1 a set of pillars reminiscent of biblical descriptions is misleading and based on a wrong reading of the relevant text.[79] Reyes (1994: 129) is right to remind us that we *cannot* be certain that the plan of Temple 1 is 'typically Phoenician' since it incorporated much of the Late Bronze Age structure which preceded it, following the same orientation.[80] In fact, none of the architectural features at Kathari find parallels in the religious sites of the Phoenician homeland discussed above, and, as I argue below, it is to Tas-Silg in Malta that we have to look for something similar.

Such uncertainties about the Phoenician characteristics of the architectural remains stalk the literature on Kition. For Corinne Bonnet (1988: 319), for example, it is the 'caractère phénicien du sanctuaire' of the Cypro-Archaic period that lends weight to the supposition that Astarte and Melqart were worshipped at Bamboula. But she does not define what she means exactly by 'Phoenician character' in this context and no parallels are cited to corroborate her claim. Likewise, Yon (1978: 918) labels the alleged sanctuary of the Cypro-Geometric Period a 'sanctuaire phénicien' because this coheres with the literary tradition that has Phoenicians settling at Kition round about this time (Gjerstad 1979; Bikai 1992). However, it is important to point out that the "Phoenician" remains uncovered by Gjerstad and Yon at Bamboula contrast

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[79] When referring to the pillars in Solomon's temple, Karageorghis (1976: 98) states: '[...] their exact position in the architectural plan of the temple is unrecorded.' This is wrong: the pillars in Solomon's temple were placed outside the edifice or formed part of the porch (1 Kings 7: 21); they were certainly *not* inside the building opposite the inner sanctuary or *debir*, as posited by Karageorghis for Temple 1 at Kathari. In *Kition V*, Karageroghis (1985: 250) was forced to conclude that, 'there is clearly considerable confusion about the use of certain terms – especially cella, adyton and holy-of-holies – outside their Near Eastern context, based on a misunderstanding of the terminology and more importantly on our inability to define the function of many features found in a temple'.

[80] The plan of Temple 1 has to be compard to the revised plan of the cella of the Late Bronze Age temple proposed by Callot (1985: fig. 67) and not that in Karageorghis (1976: fig. 14).

sharply in size and layout with the "Phoenician" complex at Kathari; moreover, nothing in Phoenicia looks *exactly* like the structures uncovered by Gjerstad and Yon at Bamboula, unless we decide to see superficial similarities between the rectangular rooms uncovered there and Shrine 1 at Sarepta.[81] In my opinion, to defend the religious nature of the remains through a discussion of the ground plans would entail begging the question of Phoenician identity at both sites, when this should be demonstrated rather than assumed. Remarks on the ambiguous nature of Kition's identity are mirrored in the material culture retrieved from both sites. While the pottery wrongly defined "Samarian ware" should have its origins in the Phoenician homeland where it has been recognized as 'Phoenician fine ware' by the excavators of Tyre and Sarepta,[82] the story told by the terracotta figures is different: the "goddess with uplifted arms" (**PLATE 12a**), whether the image of a deity or a worshipper, recovered at Bamboula from levels spanning the period 850-550 BC, and at Kathari from secondary contexts corresponding to levels dated to 850-600 BC (Karageorghis 1977a: 16-17, plate 3) (see above), is Cypriot, with origins in the Aegean not the Levant.[83] Such evidence can be interpreted in different ways: Cypriot worshippers could have been depositing statuary representing a local divinity in a sanctuary controlled by the Phoenician colonizers; otherwise, we can see Phoenicians adopting strands of the local religion, content to adore a local divinity or place offerings which are strictly speaking alien in the homeland; Cypriot syncretism with the Phoenician Astarte, mentioned on the inscription from the earliest floor at Kathari, cannot be

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[81] I have in mind the rectangular rooms of Period 4 and Period 7 at Gjerstad's site in Bamboula, and the "Phoenician sanctuary" of Cypro-Geometric III date at Yon's site. None of these, however, have benches as at Sarepta, and the orientation of the plan is different.

[82] Patricia Bikai who has studied the Phoenician pottery from Cyprus has noted that 'the Samaria repertoire looks quite distinct from the Phoenician repertoire' (1987: 70). When he published the pottery from Sarepta, Anderson (1988: 355) had made a plea to drop the term "Samaria Ware" from comparative discussions of pottery because it is 'both inappropriate and misleading'; this has recently been recalled by Ciasca (1995a). Unfortunately, the application of the term still survives in the literature: what Maas-Lindemann (1990) identifies as Phoenician fine ware from Morro de Mezquitilla in Spain, Aubet (1994: 265) calls 'cerámica fenicia de importación de tipo "Samaria"'.

[83] For a study on the "goddess with uplifted arms" in Cyprus, see Karageorghis 1977a. Here the author suggested that this figurine type was introduced to Cyprus from Crete, together with other Late Minoan elements in religion and art; this opinion was repeated recently (Karageorghis 1997: 225). Vandenabeele (1989: 267) finds no Phoenician influence in this type. The occurrence of large numbers of such terracottas at the rural sanctuary of Polis-Peristeries in Cyprus has induced the excavator (Smith 1997: 87) to think of them as images of 'worshippers' rather than as the "Goddess". She notes that as simple terracotta figurines, they are of low intrinsic value, and an experienced coroplast could fashion one in a few minutes.

ruled out, as Karageorghis and others have assumed.[84] This hypothesis would fit in with the interpretation of the oxen skulls found on the earliest floor at Kathari: the ritual of wearing bovine skulls is local, with clear antecedents in the Bronze Age (Karageorghis 1977b: 102-105). This integration between Phoenicians and Cypriots would also explain the occurrence of a word inscribed in the syllabic script of Cyprus on a red-slipped imported jug recovered from a *bothros* to the east of Temple 1 at Kathari.[85]

The Phoenician "calling card" at Kition-Kathari remains the representation in terracotta of the woman with her hands held up to the breasts, clasping the nipples between thumb and forefinger.[86] Parallels are known from the cache at Kharayeb from the layer dated to 600-400 BC, where they were employed in religious rituals probably associated with fertility.[87] For the so-called terracotta plaque figurines or "Hathor stelae" from the French excavations at Bamboula (Phase 3: *c.* 550-500 BC) (Caubet 1982; Yon & Caubet 1988: 32, fig. 8c) Phoenician intervention in the spread of the Egyptian Hathor-head motif is suspected but remains unproven because contemporary parallels are absent in the Levant.[88]

Contacts between Kition and the Phoenician homeland appear stronger for the period after the last quarter of the sixth century BC when Cyprus and the Levantine littoral are drawn into the political affairs of the Persian Empire (Reyes 1994: chapter 5). It is at this time that the limestone statuary representing Heracles-Melqart at the *Ma'abed* at Amrith (**PLATE 1d**) was acquired from Cyprus, probably from Kition,

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[84] Karageorghis (1977a: 27) and Bonnet (1988: 320).

[85] The reference is in Karageorghis (1971b: 379, fig. 86a). The inscription has been read by O. Masson as *ta-si-mi-ne-mo* but a translation is not available. The dozens of 'cruchons de fabrique Red Slip d'importation' mentioned by Karageorghis are presumably Phoenician.

[86] Karageorghis (1971b: 379, fig. 87) refers to the type as the "*dea gravida*", but here the abdomen is much more less prominent than in those representations which show the seated pregnant woman with her right hand abover her abdomen and left hand along the knee (Culican 1969). See a similar example in **PLATE 3c**.

[87] Koukabani 1973: 46, plate 7.1-3.

[88] Phoenician intervention in the spread of Egyptianizing traits in sculpture and architecture have been argued for Cyprus (Markoe 1990; Reyes 1994: 130). The Hathor-head motif is at home in Canaanite Syria and Palestine: a personage wearing the Hathor wig appears frontally on sheet metal pendants with breasts, navel and pubic region exposed; the pendants date to the Late Bronze Age (Negbi 1976: 98-99, Nos 1677-1696, figs. 114-116). Ruth Hestrin (1991: 55) has recently shown that the branch or

where similar statues occur in Gjerstad's cache at Bamboula (Gjerstad 1937) (**PLATE 11a**). It is also at this period that votive statuary in Cypriot style was being used at Bostan esh-Sheikh (Phase 2) in the territory of Sidon (Ganzmann *et al.* 1987), while in Cyprus some people of Kition and Amathus were using anthropomorphic sarcophagi similar to ones from Sidon in which to lay to rest their dead (Yon 1990a). The occurrence of similar statuary in Phoenicia and in Cyprus in contexts for which a religious function has been put forward cannot simply be presumed to be commercial; they are best explained if we assume that the transmission of sculptural styles was accompanied by shared religious beliefs even if the monuments where the statuary functioned were essentially different architecturally. Such an assumption would explain the presence of a Cypriot pilgrim at Sarepta who, some time in the fourth century, executed a dedication in his own syllabic script to Asclepius, the local Phoenician deity Eshmun (Daly 1980; Masson 1982: 45-47); it would also explain another inscriptional datum of fifth or fourth century date, thought to come from the Phoenician temple at Bostan esh-Sheikh, which records a dedication in the syllabic script of Paphos 'to the Lady', probably the Sidonian Astarte (Masson 1982: 47-49).

In conclusion, therefore, while a plausible case can be made to see religious remains at Kathari and Bamboula, a comprehensive interpretation has to await the final publication of the results of the French and Cypriot expeditions, where statistics might offer us a glimpse into the frequency of contacts or the lack of them and to serve as a check to the prevalent equation of pots with people. Meanwhile, however, if we go by what has been reported, it would seem that the local Cypriot element constituted an essential part in the development of Phoenician culture at Kition. Despite the hundred-and-fifty year haitus revealed at Kathari at the beginning of the first millennium, the activities being undertaken inside Temple 1 suggest a clear continuation with earlier practices: a resurgence of a "dormant" Cypriot culture took place by descendants of the local indigenous population. I would argue, in fact, that at Kition's Temple 1, more than anywhere else in the Phoenician World, we have indisputable evidence of that elusive contact situation, usually taken for granted, if

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stylized tree which is engraved above the pubic triangle is a symbol of the goddess 'Athirat/'Elat, the Canaanite equivalent of the goddess Asherah. Also Dever (1990: 135-136).

hardly noted, which ensued when the Phoenicians decided to settle permanently on foreign territory. Meniko in the Cypriot interior offers an interesting comparison to this phenomenon.

The case made for Meniko on the slopes of the Troodos mountains being a sanctuary is a strong one even when the site is considered in isolation, and I doubt that a stronger case can be made if we look beyond. But despite the insistance by many to the contrary, I fail to see a "Phoenician" sanctuary here during the Late Cypro-Archaic period (650-550 BC). The plans of the contemporary monuments at Amrith and Bostan esh-Sheikh have nothing in common with Meniko; besides, the monumental scale of the work in the former two sites would hardly justify the comparison. The observation that the pottery used in the ritual activities from Meniko is all local with the exception of *one* imported pot – East Greek not Phoenician – suggests that the site is overwhelmingly local and Cypriot. Despite this, the suggestion by Reyes (1994: 129) that a Phoenician cult of Baal Hammon would have been incorporated into an existing Cypriot sanctuary remains attractive; the author's opinion is, however, a one-liner and he fails to elaborate. Some Levantine, if not Phoenician, cultural penetration as far as the kingdom of Tamassos into the island's interior can be argued on the basis of the occurrence of Proto-Aeolic capitals and Egyptianizing cavetto cornices in the Royal tombs there (Reyes 1994: 43, 130).[89] Moreover, the fragmentary Phoenician red-slipped bowl, found on the earliest floor at the Temple of Astarte in Kition (Kathari) and dating to about 800 BC, has a Phoenician inscription scratched on its outer surface (**PLATE 13a**). It has been read, though not without reservations, as a dedication to Astarte in fulfillment of a vow made by a man who came from Tamassos (Karageorghis 1976: 106, plate 83).[90] While these references need not imply calling Tamassos "Phoenician", it is pertinent to see them in combination with the famous copper mining industry that flourished there: recent radiocarbon dates show

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[89] For the Tamassos Proto-Aeolic capitals see Shiloh 1979b: 37-39, Table 4: C18-C21, plate 18. No Proto-Aeolic capitals are so far known from the Phoenician homeland, while 34 examples have been recorded from modern Israel. Some pre-date the appearance of the motif on Punic stelae from the West by 150 years. Shiloh suggests that the Proto-Aeolic capitals are Israelite not Phoenician (1979b: 90-91).

[90] Reyes (1994: 103) points out that the reading of 'Tamassos' is uncertain. The official publication of the inscription by M. G. Amadasi Guzzo and V. Karageorghis in *Fouilles de Kition III* (Nicosia, 1977), pp. 149-160, D21, was not available to me for consultation.

that the mines were not opened until about 664 BC (see S. Morris 1992: 119 n. 79), which makes them almost as old as Meniko. If we assume that Phoenicians from Kition were tapping these sources, either directly or through Cypriot middlemen, then it is not unlikely that some visited the sanctuary, despite the fact that there is not a hint of a cult associated with metallurgy.[91] Indeed, while the contents of Room C are as Cypriot as sixth-century Ayia Irini on the northern coast can be,[92] certain Phoenician overtones can be claimed for the finds from primary contexts in Room A. The origins of the terracotta and limestone incense stands with petal overhangs are Phoenician, not Cypriot, and William Culican showed this with his usual confidence in an important article (1980).[93] That they formed part of cult equipment is not doubted either, despite the useful words of caution by Fowler (1985b): incense stands, with overhanging petal decoration and domed pyxides, appear on seals from the Phoenician homeland in between an enthroned deity and a votary, above which soars the winged disc (Culican 1980: plate 3, b-d) (**PLATE 7a**). In Room A at Meniko, the stands occur with an enthroned personage too, very likely the deity itself (**FIGURE 47**). Karageorghis' suggestion that this is Baal Hammon, prompted by the association of the statuette with the stands, rests on an etymology which is now doubted, but in my opinion unresolved.[94] The occurrence of similar statues at other Cypriot sites

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91 Wright (1992a: 261) writes that Meniko was a 'rural sanctuary for metal workers' but does not say why this is so.

92 In the publication of Meniko, Karageorghis has noted that the closest parallels to the statuary and the andesite sphere occur at Ayia Irini. Note, however, that Phoenician pottery has been found at Ayia Irini and Bikai suggests that it is akin to that from Sarepta (1987: 70), though Greek pottery is not unknown either (see Reyes 1994: 148). Phoenician influence on the production of terracotta production of Ayia Irini has also been claimed (Vandenabeele 1986: 355). The 'horns of consecration', also from Room C, have their origin in the Aegean where they occur in Late Bronze Age religious contexts (Renfrew 1985: 429). Two have also been found at Kition-Kathari in Late Bronze Age levels (Karageorghis 1985: 255).

93 Note, however, that Culican was wrong when he remarked that 'incense burners with petal fringes do not appear to be represented in Assyrian art' (1980: 89). Two examples are depicted on a relief of Ashurbanipal (*c.* 645 BC) where the king and his queen are shown at a ceremonial banquet (Curtis & Reade 1995: 122; Frankfort 1996: fig. 217); the context here is secular not religious ritual and implies that the incense was being used as a perfume. It is possible that these examples were made by Phoenician craftsmen responsible also for the ivory panels with which the furniture in the same relief is inlaid.

94 The monograph by Paolo Xella on the god Baal Hammon (1991) does not make any reference to Meniko so that the suggested association between the incense burners and the etymology is not investigated. Indeed, Xella & Ribichini (1994: 17) would rather see the Phoenician god as 'Lord of the (domestic) chapel' following some Ugaritic texts, rather than 'Lord of the perfume altars' ('Baal le brûlant': Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 72, fig. 25). Lipinski, however, is of the opinion that the identification made last century of Baal Hammon with the 'Lord of the Amanus' is the correct one (1995a: 251 n. 216); see also Cross (1973: 26-27) who argues that there is no relation between the deity and the

(Karageorghis 1977b: plate 15.1, 3), and the rendering of the facial features – almond-shaped eyes with protruding lids, a large pointed nose, pointed animal ears – suggest to me that this terracotta was produced in Cyprus by a local, and Phoenician prototypes need not be argued for.[95] In view of what has been discussed, I still think that Meniko should be called a Cypriot sanctuary and not a Phoenician one; if Phoenicians were indeed roaming the area round Meniko to pursue business, it is not unlikely that they brought incense burners and frankincense as a gift to the local people and/or the local deity.[96] This is of course a suggestion, one which explains the prominent position afforded to the stands within this religious complex.

4.4 Crete

Kommos is the only site in Crete for which a Phoenician shrine has been claimed (Shaw 1989). In CHAPTER III, I argued that a strong case for seeing a religious building is made only when the alleged shrine is compared to depictions of three pillars on stelae from the Punic West. Shaw looked for parallels beyond the Aegean because he found no evidence for similar pillared structures in Crete or the Greek mainland in the ninth and eighth centuries BC. Seeking out this source in the Levant is prompted by the occurrence in Crete of objects which are clearly of Phoenician or North Syrian origin,[97] even though no permanent Phoenician settlement

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brazier. See Culican (1968: 68-69) who champions the old theory. An excellent synthesis on this issue is to be found in Lancel (1995a: 194-199).

95 Indeed, the similar hand-made terracotta statuette (12 cm. high) known to have been found in Amrith, and now in the Louvre, could very well be a Cypriot import. See Vandenabeele (1986: 352) and the comments by Karageorghis to her paper (p. 358).

96 It seems that the Phoenicians acted as middlemen in the trade in frankincense obtained from southern Arabia. Grainger (1991: 76) recalls a reference in the comic poetry of Hermippos who refers to incense being imported to Athens in the late fifth century BC.

97 The Cretan oriental connection was confirmed last century when metal artefacts discovered in the Idaean cave were thought to be the work of Phoenician craftsmen tapping the rich iron sources of this region. This Orientalia has been debated, with scholars promoting local (Frothingham 1888) rather than Levantine (Dunbabin 1957; Boardman 1961: 138, 150) origins for it; see also Sakellarakis (1988a, 1988b) for syntheses of renewed excavations. Further finds include a bronze bowl inscribed in Phoenician letters found in a reused Minoan tomb in the Tekke cemetery of Knossos (Catling 1976-1977: 11-14, figs. 23, 27-28). The date of the bowl has been debated with a range between the twelfth and tenth centuries BC, depending on the chronology of Attic Protogeometric pottery found within the tomb; it appears that the later date is the most likely (Shaw 1989: 181; S. Morris 1992: 159, n. 47). For a general review of Crete and its Oriental contacts in the Bronze and Iron Ages, see Negbi 1992: 607-609; S. Morris 1992: chapter 6.

or colony is known on Crete. But the issue that needs addressing here is determining exactly what is "Phoenician" at Kommos. Differing opinions on this point continue to afflict recent contributions intent on promoting Easterners in Iron Age Crete. For Sarah Morris (1992: 158), Kommos became a critical Iron Age nexus following the expansion of Phoenician trade to the Assyrian Empire: she claims that, 'the Iron Age sanctuary [at Kommos] resembles a Phoenician one in plan and imports [...] the tri-pillar shrine and small bench-and-hearth temples called "Cretan" are familiar in the Levant, as at Tell Sukas' (1992: 155). The same opinion is expressed by Aaron Brody (1996: 99-100) who calls the temples at Kommos 'Phoenician sea-side sanctuaries' and compares the architecture of Temple B with the Period G^1 temples at Sukas. On the contrary, I want to argue that the analogies sought are not correct and tend to eclipse the Cretan contribution at Kommos. I have argued that Sukas (Period G) should not be called Phoenician, and therefore parallels between it and Kommos should not be drawn in the first place.[98] But even if they were – simply for the sake of argument – the evidence cited by both S. Morris and Brody does not stand up to scrutiny: Tell Sukas and Mina Sukas had neither tri-pillar structures nor benches, and it is important to add that the remains of Period G^3 at Tell Sukas post-date the Phase 1 at Kommos (Temple B) by about a century.[99] Moreover, while a Phoenician origin could be sought for the Egyptian faience figurines, the small bronze bull is at home in Crete and Near Eastern parallels are not necessary.[100]

Looking for a similar floor plan to Temple B at Kommos is fraught with difficulties. Within the Aegean the exercise is hindered by the apparent variety of contemporary evidence available, where Kommos appears to be the exception – in

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98 Note that it was the excavator of Kommos himself who had recalled the seventh-century temple at Sukas, referring to it as Greek not Phoenician or Syrian (Shaw 1989: 183 n. 75). If we were forced to see a connection between Kommos and Sukas, I would suggest that the direction of influence would be from Crete to the Syrian coast and not vice-versa.

99 By the time of the G^1 remains at Tell Sukas (*c.* 552-498 BC), the tri-pillar structure had long been been incorporated into a hearth (*c.* 630 BC).

100 The bronze bull, the bronze horse, and the shield are 'purely local artifacts' (Shaw 1980: 251). Brody's (1992: 99) remark that the bull is 'typically Phoenician' has no value because no reference is supplied, and Morris's citation of a similar bronze bull from Israel (1992: 155 n. 25) robs the archaeological context of its importance. Neither Brody nor Morris have pointed out that the bronze bulls from Kommos occur with a figurine of a bronze horse (Temple B, Phase 2; Shaw 1980: plates 64d, 65b). Indeed, while bronze bull figurines are known from the Dictaean cave and elsewhere in

terms of "monumentality" – rather than the rule (Morgan 1993: 18-19; 1994: 113). The series of hearths built inside Temple B, however, seem to be a local feature (Marinatos 1993: 229), as is the 'ritual feasting' that took place here (Morgan 1994: 113). Outside the Aegean, Sarepta's Shrine 1 on the Phoenician coast would be a contemporary analogy where benches line the walls of a smaller, rectangular room with the focus of attention at the shorter end opposite the entrance (Shaw 1989: 174-175). But Sarepta's baetyl is assumed, while the doorway has no pillar; no hearth was uncovered either and no reference is made to bones or seafood suggestive of feasting.

Amid the debate regarding the role of the Phoenicians at Kommos, scholars have overlooked the conclusions reached by the excavator in the preliminary reports: 'the majority of offerings and the pottery are of local inspiration' (Shaw 1981: 251). Only a small amount of pottery, about 200 amphora sherds, appear to be Phoenician, with the majority dating to about 875-800 BC.[101] Ultimately, it is the tri-pillared structure that bears a Phoenician stamp. For while the adoration of sacred stones is known from the Bronze Age Aegean (Warren 1990), none of the archaeological finds or pictorial depictions look remotely like the later set-up from Kommos. While some foreign parallels sought by Shaw are incorrect,[102] the most important datum remains the third-century BC stele discovered in Marsala (Lilybaeum) in Sicily in 1882 (*CIS* I, 138). The religious reading of the depiction (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 308) is unambiguous and confirmed by the Punic dedication to Baal Hammon which accompanies it: three tapering pillars on a base arch above a personage, probably a

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Crete (Boardman 1961: plates 7, 8; Shaw 1980: 235 n. 67), horses and oxen dominate the subjects in figurine assemblages in Early Iron Age sites in Greece (Morgan 1994: 119).

[101] The Levantine wares have been tentatively identified as "Phoenician" in Shaw's last major synthesis on Kommos (1989: 181-182). It is interesting to note that when Robert Koehl, the person who worked on the pottery from Sarepta, scanned the Levantine wares he was of the opinion that they were more like that from Punic North Africa (Shaw 1984: n. 52); that the wares could be local imitations was suggested too (Shaw 1984: 279). Koehl's remarks would suggest that a comparison between the Temple B at Kommos and Sarepta's Shrine 1 is uncalled for because there is no resemblance in the pottery.

[102] Shaw (1989: 176) did remark that the cases he examined were 'not entirely convincing'. The alleged altar for three baetyls at Motya has earlier been identified with the weight used in an olive press. Shaw's remark to Tas-Silg in Malta is not correct and should have been Altar 45 (Ciasca 1995: fig. 6). Lezine's reconstruction of three baetyls in the *Ma'abed* at Amrith is speculative, and in the site report the authors refuse to speculate on what was placed inside (Dunand & Saliby 1985).

priest, an incense burner, a symbol of Tanit, and a caduceus.[103] When taken together with the repeated depiction of similar pillars and symbols on stelae from funerary (tophet) contexts Shaw's identification of the tri-pillared set-up at Kommos with a Phoenician religious shrine is a strong proposition for which no alternatives are at present possible (Cintas 1947: fig. 68; Shaw 1989: 176-178).[104] Once this is accepted, Phoenician activity at Kommos could be understood in the way suggested by Shaw (1989: 182-183): seasonal stop-overs to conduct business or seek safe harbour during the period 875-800 BC (Phase A2) when the Phoenician pottery is commonest (Shaw 1989: 182); the construction in about 800 BC, of a new temple (B), with its tri-pillar shrine, however, would indicate that the Phoenicians required a permanent sacred area (Phase 1) in foreign territory.[105] The ritual was probably mixed as is suggested by the local votives and pottery which clearly outnumber Phoenician ones. By 750 BC a Greek shield was probably added behind the sacred pillars, the hearth was enlarged, and no Phoenician pottery is present, indicating either waning Phoenician contacts (Shaw 1989: 183), an interpretation which I would follow, or the almost total assimilation of a small Phoenician community within the Greek. By about 630 BC, the tri-pillar shrine was transformed into a hearth and its original function forgotten.

It is important to point out that this reading of the data is one of many, and de Polignac's reminder that 'it is important not to confuse the origin of objects and the

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[103] All these symbols are recurrent on the tophet stelae from Sousse in Tunisia (Cintas 1947). The odd-looking base of the tri-pillar structure on the stele from Lilybaeum is simply a stylized version of the plinth surmounted by an Egyptianizing cavetto cornice (*cf.* Cintas 1947: figs 103, 112, 114). Also note that on one stele from Sousse (1947: fig. 106) a twin set of tri-pillared structures is accompanied by what appears to be an offering table or altar. For the Semitic origins of this and similar depictions from Lilybeum, see Bisi 1968a; **PLATE 14b.**

[104] The tri-pillared structure at Kommos recalls also the much earlier remains at the Temple of Obelisks at Byblos mentioned very briefly by Shaw (1989: 174) (*terminus ante quem c.* 1808 (*DAE* dates); Periods HI/HII: Saghieh 1983: 19-20; Dunand 1973a: 50-54). Here, 44 standing pillars fashioned like Egyptian obelisks were secured in mortises cut into blocks by tenons in their lower end (see Dunand 1950: plates 24, 36.1; Mettinger 1995: 127) (**PLATE 15b**); some of the pillars were placed on protruding bases suggestive of some sort of offering tables (**PLATE 15a**). In one case, seen in **PLATE 14a** (Dunand 1950: plate 30; Parrot *et al.* 1976: fig. 40, top left) five tapering pillars with the middle, reconstructed one, higher than the rest, recall the Kommos examples. In this case it is important to go back to the original publication by Dunand to gauge exactly the reconstruction that has taken place given the fact that the entire complex was actually dismantled and reconstructed nearby (Dunand 1973a: 50).

[105] Thus John Boardman (1990: 184): Kommos is 'our earliest unequivocal [...] evidence for an actual presence of Phoenicians in residence on any Greek site'.

origin of those who dedicated them to the divinity' (1994: 7) is a stark reminder of the ambiguous and fluid nature of contact situations touched upon earlier.

PART II

4.5 The Western Mediterranean.

'I think that the Heracles honoured by the Iberians at Tartessus, where certain Pillars have also been named after him, is the Tyrian Heracles, since Tartessus is a Phoenician foundation and it is in the Phoenician style that the Temple of Heracles there has been built and that the sacrifices are offered.'

– ARRIAN II, 16, 5

'At the beginning of spring Scipio laid siege to Byrsa and to the harbour called Cothon [...] They entered the temple of Apollo, whose statue was there, covered with gold, in a shrine of beaten gold, weighing 1000 talents [...]'

– APPIAN, *Libyca* 127

'While the Carthaginians after their victory were sacrificing the fairest of their captives as thank-offerings to the gods by night, and while a great blaze enveloped the men who were being offered as victims, a sudden blast of wind struck them, with the result that the sacred tent, which was near the altar, caught fire [...]'

– DIODOROS SICULUS 20, 65, 1

4.5.1 Introduction.

Proceeding to the western Mediterranean we immediately have to face a number of shortcomings which hinder drawing conclusions and hypotheses from the data presented in CHAPTER III: first, the tightly controlled ceramic chronology available for sites like Sarepta and Tyre in the Phoenician homeland is not matched in the West, bar a few exceptions arising from recent work;[106] secondly, while the data are more numerous for the West, they are not necessarily better in quality because very little has been published beyond the preliminary stage. Before we pass on to consider the sites together, a few words have to be spent stating on what basis – of a general, rather than a particular, nature – we are justified in seeking comparisons between East and West.

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106 These include Spanish sites like Toscanos (Niemeyer & Shubart 1969), Castillo de Doña Blanca near Cádiz (Ruíz Mata & Pérez 1995). Exploration of the archaic levels of Carthage has only just begun with interesting results (Docter & Niemeyer 1994 and references therein).

The connections that can be traced between the Phoenicians in their homeland and those abroad, both before and after Carthage intervened politically in the activities of the western Phoenicians, about 550 BC, are based on two sources of information: the literary sources and the archaeological; these have been the subject of a recent monograph by Ahmed Ferjaoui (1992).[107] Comprehensive surveys of the classical sources have been compiled (Bunnens 1979; Mazza *et al.* 1988), and they do tell us a fair amount about the Phoenicians in the West. But these accounts have to be incorporated into the archaeological picture with due caution, especially the 'chauvinist' claims that colour legends of Hellenic priority in parts of the western Mediterranean where Phoenicians from the Levant had already been present, and Mycenaeans and Cypriots much before them (S. Morris 1992: 205-211).[108] As David Ridgway constantly reminds us, we have to 'admit the existence of complex interrelationships between the 9th- and 8th-century BC Western initiatives of Euboeans and the partners or rivals they doubtless called *Phoinikes*' (1990: 69); partners more than rivals, as competition appears to be a later phenomenon involving primarily Carthage. Going back to the literary sources (see Ferjaoui 1992: 27-46, 62-65), those of particular interest to us here are relatively late, but do suggest a religious connection between Carthage and its mother-city Tyre down into the Hellenistic period. The first, by Arrian, refers to Carthaginian envoys at Tyre bearing, 'in accordance with an ancient law', the first fruits from Carthage to deposit them at the temple of Melqart. The envoys were present in Tyre when Alexander sacked the city in 332 BC. Polybius makes an indirect reference to this practice in 162 BC, which to Fergus Millar (1983: 58) and others, is evidence that a few years before Carthage fell to the Romans, 'the links between mother-city and colony never were [*sic*] broken'. The second concerns the oath taken by the Carthaginian general Hannibal in 215 BC after a treaty was reached with Philip V of Macedonia, during which the Tyrian pantheon was invoked (Lancel 1995a: 208-209; Xella & Ribichini 1994: 40-41; also Bonnet 1988: 182).

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107 But see reviews by Josette Elayi (1996) and Sabatino Moscati (1995a: 619-630).

108 Written centuries after the events they purport to describe actually took place, the nature of these texts is probably aetiological, written to rival claims of commercial interests common to both Greeks and Carthaginians.

Further information about the connection between the homeland and the West is gleaned from inscriptions gathered by Ferjaoui (1992: 175-183). The limitations of this type of datum are of course well known: the majority of inscriptions are the result of nineteenth-century antiquarian hunts rather than systematic excavations and therefore their dates depend entirely on the study of the letter-forms rather than their archaeological context; but the inscriptions are convenient in so far as they allow us to pin down Phoenicians and Carthaginians overseas (Grainger 1991: 205).[109] In Carthage there are references to Tyrians (*CIS* I, 4913, 4914) as well as a family from Sidon (*CIS* I, 308) and another from Arwad (*CIS* I, 5945). The latter, of third-century date, is perhaps the most valuable for its context is clearly funerary and speaks about the tomb that a woman from Arwad had made for her dead husband. There is also a group of twenty inscriptions of the same date from Carthage (*CIS* I, 272-93), not mentioned by Ferjaoui, which record devotion to the goddess Tanit by some Sidonians (Grainger 1991: 203-204); but only in one case (*CIS* I, 290) is the phrase 'a man of Sidon' certain. 'A man of Kition' is also recorded on a third-century BC inscription from Carthage (*RÉS*, 1225). From Tyre, we have a reference to a person from 'the new city' (*qrthdšt*), presumably the Carthaginian capital, recorded on a stele of the fourth century (Ferjaoui 1992: 180-181). From Malta there are two identical third-century bilingual dedications on marble *cippi* to Heracles/Melqart, made by two Tyrian brothers (*CIS* I, 122 A, B). Finally, there is a reference to a Sidonian at Grotta Regina near Palermo, if we accept Garbini's (1983) reading of this stray find.

Tracing the connections between East and West through material remains has long been a fundamental aspect of scholarly interest in Phoenician history: Perrot & Chipiez's (1885) survey of the 'history of Phoenician art' was extended beyond the Levant and Cyprus to incorporate what was known archaeologically of the Semitic merchants in the West, as did George Rawlinson (1889) and Richard Pietschmann (1889). As archaeological activity flourished over the years, Oriental prototypes were sought for new discoveries being made in the western Mediterranean. This is not the

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109 The use of inscriptions for this sort of exercise is not a novelty: see Corbett (1982: 81-84), Millar (1983); Grainger's (1991: 206-219) survey remains the most exhaustive treatment of the subject.

place to trace this whole process in detail: excellent surveys have been published recently to place in context what Punic cultural identity owed to the Phoenician homeland, a lot of which is the legacy of Moscati's school.[110] The over-arching conclusion presented by scholars is that Punic culture in Carthage remained essentially Phoenician in language, script, architecture, art and religion, despite the penetration of Hellenism (Ferjaoui 1992: 478). The situation varies in the Carthaginian possessions. The smaller islands provide an interesting comparison: while the Maltese islands, like Carthage, remained essentially Phoenician culturally (Hölbl 1989: 172-173; Moscati 1993b), no original art was developed despite the apparent insularity (*cf.* Culican 1988: 151), and only in the production of pottery are "local" variants claimed (Ciasca 1988: 148; Culican 1988); by contrast, the art of Punic Ibiza follows its own pattern, develops in isolation with an overt preoccupation for detail, and does not appear elsewhere (Tarradell 1974: 43-48).

Further details about what constituted the religious cultural identity of the West will be considered in the discussion that follows. Malta will be considered first to link up with the discussion on Kition, followed by Sardinia where the sites are more numerous.

4.5.2 Malta.

In CHAPTER III we concluded that we are justified in seeing a religious site at Tas-Silg (**3.5.1**), even if the case made is lacking in details. Comparisons with elsewhere, and in particular the East, are prompted by the fact that the material culture recovered here, as elsewhere in Malta, is firmly rooted in the Levant with typical and prevalent Egyptianizing traits:[111] of particular interest in this context are incense burner stands of limestone and terracotta recovered in the midden to the south of the

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[110] See papers in *I Fenici 1988*, and Moscati 1968b, Bisi 1971, 1977, 1979. For Carthage, see Ferjaoui (1992: chapter 2) and Lancel (1995a: chapter 8). For a brief overview of the historiography of Phoenician art, see Matthiae 1971.

[111] This thesis has been the subject of an excellent survey by Hölbl 1989.

complex (Ciasca 1984),[112] which find the best parallels in Cyprus, especially with the examples from Meniko-Litharkes (**3.3.3**) in the Cypriot interior (see Culican 1980),[113] but their production at Tas-Silg is clearly local and probably later by a century or more (Ciasca 1984: 180); an ivory palmette (Moscati 1970) conforms to a style of carving which distinguishes it as Phoenician rather than North Syrian, with elegant symmetric volutes at the stem-juncture (Winter 1976: 6). The details of the architectural layout at Tas-Silg are impossible to reproduce and the scatter of decorated architectural fragments from secondary contexts (Ciasca 1991: 756) refuse to gel into a convincing picture more elevated than the commonplace and already painted by the excavators. Ciasca's (1993) tentative reconstructions for the low altars would date to the eve of the Roman conquest of the island (218 BC), leaving a blank in the record for the earlier periods. The ubiquitous Egyptianizing cavetto cornice is present in blocks retrieved from secondary contexts, and we assume that it would have crowned chapels or rooms set aside for prayer, exactly as it appears on a small representation on a limestone block (10 cm. high), from the site, crowning a door in which stands a figure (Moscati 1973, Hölbl 1989: 153-154); one block carries the moulding on three sides suggesting that it was placed on a pillar *in antis*, while another is crowned by a double-cavetto moulding on all four sides, similar to examples from the *Ma'abed* at Amrith noted earlier, suggesting that it served as a capital for a free-standing pillar.[114]

There is one point where analogies could be taken further to defend the religious nature of the Tas-Silg remains: I have in mind the slab of limestone (2.75 by 1.10 m.) labelled Structure 45 which was found embedded in a rectangular cut in the

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[112] Moscati's (1964, 1966) opinion that the limestone examples formed part of the architectural decoration of the temple is no longer tenable.

[113] A reference to a terracotta incense-burner stand with petal decoration from a rural Cypro-Archaic sanctuary at Polis-Peristeries (Smith 1997: 87) was noted too late to be pursued and incorporated in this study.

[114] Unfortunately, the moulding (German: *rundstab*) which runs beneath the cavetto and which is used as a dating element, is missing on most of the examples: however, a date in the fourth century BC is likely, as the profile of the cavetto moulding fits in between those from Amrith and Dougga in Lézine's scheme (1960: chapter 12, fig. 52) where the overhang of the cavetto element is not as marked as in later examples on Punic mausolea in Numidia. Fragments of a similar cornice ('Punic architectural mouldings') were found at Mtarfa Hill opposite Mdina, where Mayr had located oriental pillars belonging to a religious building (1909: 147). Hölbl (1989: 29, plate 19.1) thinks that these fragments must belong to a cultic construction.

bedrock on the central axis of what would have been the temple (**3.5.1**; **FIGURE 53**). Ciasca has recently reiterated that the installation should be related to the first Phoenician presence at Tas-Silg (1993: 232), interpreting it as an altar. But the examples she quotes (**3.5.1**) to support this view did not produce the contextual evidence necessary to show convincingly that the slab was indeed a table where action commensurate with a ritual interpretation was carried out. I want to argue that this evidence is in fact available at Kition-Kathari's Temple 1 (**3.3.2**): there, a rectangular slab of local gypsum (2.16 by 0.86 m.) was found to one side of the axis of the temple by one of the "pillars" embedded in the earliest floor of the temple, and was in use for the period 850-600 BC (**FIGURE 42a**, **PLATE 12b**). At Kathari the occurrence of large quantities of restorable Phoenician bowls, quantities of charcoal, and a dozen ox skulls from around the gypsum slab (Floor 3), allowed us to conclude, in accordance with the excavator's preliminary remarks (Karageorghis 1970: 252; 1976: 98), that this was a special installation where offerings were placed. Both the slab at Kathari and the example from Tas-Silg have three perforations but their placement around the edges of the slabs differ (Karageorghis 1971: plate 51); besides, the Maltese example is twice as wide as the Cypriot slab. In the third phase (600-450 BC), the first offering table was covered over, and a similar slab (1.36 by 1.20 m.) was moved to the temple's central axis between the two "pillars" (**FIGURE 43a**), a layout which is strikingly similar to the the set-up at Tas-Silg (**FIGURE 53**). It too has three perforations but these are not apparent from the published photographs (Karageorghis 1971: plate 5); what is apparent, instead, are low channels running along the two short sides similar to the ones on the Tas-Silg block, together with a slab set on its edge on the long back side; the whole has a striking similarity to one of the reconstructions drawn up by Ciasca (1993: fig. 5; **FIGURE 53c**). I want to suggest that when the two sites are taken together they reinforce the argument put forward for Kition that we are dealing with an installation specific to Phoenician sanctuaries: in other words, the similarities in the form of the slabs justifies their classification into a single type of feature, representing a specific use: a low offering table. If an offering table of this size required a temple as large as Kition's then it is safe to postulate something similar for Malta.

Besides the foregoing analogies, nothing substantial at Tas-Silg has similarities with structures elsewhere, and on current evidence, we are not in a position to defend the nature of Structures 38, 43 and Space 4 by reference to other sites. The only remark I would hazard to add, by way of anticipation, is that the area covered by Space 4 would roughly equal the floor area of the contemporary Hall 6 at the Mastio of Monte Sirai in Sardinia (**Table 4.2**), to be discussed shortly.

For the Zurrieq Tower (**3.5.2**), the plan and elevation of the building are the only elements to go by to discuss whether the building served as a place set aside for religious ritual. The analogies sought with the Phoenician homeland are a nineteenth century legacy, sought mainly on account of the Egyptianizing moulding which crowns it (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 374): the similarities with the *Ma'abed* at Amrith have been noted by Hölbl (1989: 146-149) who dates the Zurrieq Tower to the end of the sixth century/beginning of the fifth, a date to which we subscribe.[115] The nature of this unique monument has to remain conjectural: unlike the *Ma'abed* at Amrith, the building was clearly closed, was not intended to house a shrine viewed from a distance, and it clearly formed part of a larger complex the remains of which are apparent in the eighteenth century drawing (**FIGURE 56**); like the *Ma'abed* and the shrines at Aïn el-Hayât, the floor space is similar (**Table 4.2**). If Mayr (1909: 90) was right in his supposition that a lintel sculpted with a winged sun-disk in Lord Strickland's private collection in Malta came from this site, then the argument could be taken further, following on what was discussed in PART I (above), and the Zurrieq Tower brought even closer to the Phoenician homeland;[116] but any information on which Mayr based his assumption is not available, and the sculpted lintel does not appear in the list of antiquities which Lord Strickland bequeathed to the Government of Malta in 1940 (de Trafford 1998: 39). It is tempting to hypothesise that at Zurrieq we have the reproduction in elevation of what the remains at the larger site at Tas-Silg

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[115] Hölbl's date, which is a century earlier than Ciasca's (1991: 755), seems to be correct if we follow the evolution of the profile of the cavetto moulding as it travels from east to west: the cornice at Zurrieq as it appears on the plans included here for the first time (**FIGURE 56**) matches the one at Amrith (Lézine 1960: fig. 52) with the roll moulding having an unchamfered face.

[116] Amrith is also recalled in a small faience amulet shaped like a papyrus capital from a tomb at Tal-Horob near Rabat, published by Hölbl (1989: 157, No. 38, plate 11.2): it represents in miniature the limestone prototype recovered from the cache of the *Ma'abed* there (Dunand 1946-1948: plate 42.118-119).

must have looked like, and of other sites in the western Mediterranean where similar architectural mouldings turn up in quantities (see below); but this is begging the question and the issue must remain open until further evidence, from other sites, is available. In a Phoenician settlement like Malta, where carved stelae and *cippi* representing shrines and chapels are entirely missing, a little faience amulet published by Hölbl (1989: 72, No. 8, plate 10.4a) and thought to come from the Rabat area, should be mentioned in that it clearly is a schematic representation in miniature of a *naiskos* or chapel with a sun-disc on the cornice and crowned with a frieze of *uraei*.

In conclusion, however, if the nature of the site at Zurrieq eludes us, it is at the least worth pointing out that the excellent state of preservation of the monument allows us to see what unit of measurement could have been used in its construction by the architect of the time. If we had to convert the dimensions of the building, 3 m. square with ashlar blocks 0.48 m. wide, by reference to a unit of measurement – say, a cubit – used in Phoenician and Punic times, then a value of 0.50 m. would give an area of 6 by 6 cubits. This calculation is striking if we see it in the light of the sexagesimal system of numbering known to have existed in the Levant.[117]

4.5.4 Sardinia.

In CHAPTER III we argued that when the Sardinian sites are considered *in isolation*, only three present modest cases for considering them as religious sites,[118] while in only one instance (**3.8.2** Bithia) is the case a very strong one. In two cases (**3.8.17**: *Tempio delle Gole Egizie*, Tharros; **3.8.5**: Matzanni) the sites are unexcavated and known only through a scatter of Egyptianizing cornice blocks, while in a third (**3.8.3**: Capo Sant'Elia) an inscription retrieved from a secondary context, suggests the existence of a religious site, so far untraced. If we follow the dates put forward in the reports, none of the sites pre-date Barreca's Punic II Period (500-400 BC), and the

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[117] Punic cubits have been reported by Acquaro (1991), equivalent to 0.46 m., for the Temple of Doric half-columns at Tharros, and by Serge Lancel (1995a: 162), equivalent to 0.52 m., for buildings he uncovered on the slopes of the Byrsa hill in Carthage.

[118] **3.8.1** Antas, **3.8.6** Monte Sirai, **3.8.11** Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao.

high chronologies suggested for Bithia and Capo San Marco (Tharros), have been brought into question and found to be untenable. As such, *no* religious structural remains exist from Sardinia's Phoenician period proper.

If we start by considering together the sites known through the works of Mingazzini, Pesce and Barreca we notice that topography and plan were taken to be defining criteria of Phoenician and Punic religious sites: 'Phoenician [*sic*] high places' were noted at Nora (*Alto Luogo di Tanit*), Sant'Antioco (*Forte Sabaudo*) and at the Temple of Doric half-columns (Phase 1) (Tharros) where no finds could be associated with the remains; tripartite plans were traced at Antas, Monte Sirai (*MS II*: 39), the Temple of Demeter (Tharros) and Capo San Marco (Tharros). Let us look at these criteria carefully in the light of what was discussed in the first part of this chapter.

We saw in CHAPTER I that scholars have long assumed that the Phoenicians adored their gods at the "high places" (Hebrew *bamôt*) mentioned in the Old Testament (Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 241; Gsell 1920: 391). This romanticized view of a primitive religion associated with the numinous has prevailed in the literature (Schmitz 1992: 361). When Sardinian archaeologists located Phoenician "high places" on their island they were relying mainly on biblical descriptions, and thus assuming that similar religious practices were shared between the early Israelites and the Phoenicians on the coastal plain. But the issue of the "high places" is more complicated than might have been envisaged at the time. Indeed, the ubiquitous "high place" or bamah (Hebrew *bamâ*) is one of the debated puzzles of biblical exegesis. Recent surveys by Barrick (1992) and Emerton (1997) have shown that although we know from the Bible that the bamah was a type of cultic installation, the precise architecture details and the purpose of the "high places" escape us. The interpretations put forward by scholars have revolved around the various etymologies of the word bamah studied by philologists, lexicographers and exegesists: a topographical term meaning high ground; a funerary installation or grave mound; an object shaped like a hill; a shrine, and so forth. When Syro-Palestinian archaeologists have looked for a bamah in the archaeological record they simply chose their etymologically-inspired interpretation of this cultic phenomenon, upsetting that delicate balance between

archaeological and textual interpretation mentioned earlier in connection with Solomon's Temple (Fowler 1982; Barrick 1975: 592-593). The outcome has been 'a bewildering collection of dissimilar things currently being identifed as *bamôth*', and disagreement between scholars on their identifications (Barrick 1975: 593 n. 147). For example, when Albright (1957) identified a mass of rock at Petra with a "high place" he was choosing an obscure Arabic etymology for the word bamah. Subsequent excavation at Petra by P. J. Parr (1962) showed that what Albright had interpreted as a structure for Nabatean cult practices, was in fact a round tower serving a military purpose, an interpretation which Albright refused (see Vaughan 1974: 37-39 and Fowler 1981: 205). More recently, a stone structure uncovered at Mount Ebal in the hill country of Manasseh in Israel, was identified by its excavator Adam Zertal as an Israelite mountaintop "high place" with an altar dating to Iron Age I (1200-1000 BC) (Zertal 1985). Aharon Kempinski (1986), and others, have refused this interpretation and argue that the structure was in fact an isolated house or watchtower. Zertal has rebutted this suggestion on a number of occasions and found no reason to alter his original interpretation (Zertal 1986, 1993, 1997; see Coogan 1987).

This sort of debate is mirrored in Sardinia where various authors have thought that the sites do not justify a religious interpretation. Thus, the 'High Place of Tanit' at Nora (**3.8.7**) has been interpreted as a lighthouse (Mingazzini 1948: 79 n. 8) and as a keep or tower (Bondì 1980); similarly, a military interpretation (a look-out post or keep) has been suggested for the remains at the "high place" at Sant'Antioco (**3.8.10**; Bartoloni 1971).

If we put aside the philological issues regarding Old Testament "high places", we would still find no analogies in the Phoenician homeland, or even elsewhere in the western Mediterranean, for the Sardinian sites discussed here. Harden's (1962: 94) suggestion that 'high places must have been frequent in Phoenicia' remains unproven, especially because we do not know exactly what the ones mentioned in the Old Testament looked like. Emerton's (1997: 129) conclusion that '[...] the best policy is simply to regard any local sanctuary as possibly a *bamâ* but to recognize that we cannot be certain' is not a helpful starting point in this context, and mirrors the stand

taken by scholars a hundred years ago: '[...] ultimately bama is the name applied to *any* idolatrous shrine or altar' (Robertson Smith 1927: 490; emphasis added). Indeed, when a colloquium was organised in 1977 to discuss temples and high places in the ancient Near East (Biran 1981), no references were made to Phoenician 'high places', and in his paper Vassos Karageorghis refused to enter the controversy, noting instead that the Phoenician temples he uncovered at Kition (Kathari) were 'situated not on elevated ground, but on a flat area [...]' (1981: 82).

To return to the Sardinian data: the religious nature of the remains at Sant'Antioco simply cannot be defended. The case of Nora is compelling only when seen in conjunction with the retrieval of Egyptianizing cornice blocks from the flanks of the hill. Tore's suggestion that an aedicule crowned with these blocks was built on the platform, adds a missing architectural element to Patroni's analogy with the *Ma'abed* at Amrith (Patroni 1904). But such cornice blocks are hardly sufficient evidence to defend the religious nature of this site, as well as others in Sardinia (namely, Matzanni, *Tempio delle Gole Egizie* - Tharros). This is not to deny that Egyptian cavetto cornices *could* have been preferred by the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians for their religious buildings (see Lézine 1960: 97-101).[119] Indeed, the retrieval of such blocks at a number of sites discussed in the preceding chapter, especially those already established as sanctuaries in the Levant, would argue strongly in favour of such a supposition; this is, in fact, the conclusion reached by Wagner (1980: 179). But I would emphasize that the simple equation "Egyptian cornice = religious building" cannot, on current evidence, be applied because we simply do not know whether such crowning elements were also used in domestic and palatial architecture. Moreover, their occurrence on funerary stelae and mausolea[120] is a reminder that warrants caution. In conclusion, therefore, the religious nature of the

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[119] That this was the case in Egypt is very clear. But the cavetto cornice is derived from the shape of palm leaves placed along the mud-brick walls in *domestic* architecture (Wildung 1997: 15).

[120] The Egyptian cavetto cornice is present on fifth-century BC stelae from the tophet at Carthage and survives into the third century BC where it can be seen on a stele from the tophet at Sousse (Cintas 1947: fig. 69). It was also used to crown a Doric entablature in the third-century circular tomb at Medracen in Algeria, and elsewhere along the Maghreb, as it appears projecting from the third/second-century BC mausoleum at Dougga in Tunisia (see Perrot & Chipiez 1885: 376, figs 262-264; Poinssot 1983; Rakob 1979: 145-171, especially pp. 167-168).

sites at Nora (High Place of Tanit), Temple of the Doric half-columns (Phase 1), Temple of the Egyptianizing cornices (Tharros), and Matzanni cannot be defended.

Earlier in this chapter we concluded that none of the Phoenician religious sites in the Levant or Cyprus follow a tripartite layout, and that there is, as yet, no evidence to argue for a connection between the biblical description of Solomon's temple and Phoenician temple design. The assertions of Lancel (1995a: 213) that 'archaeology has sometimes been able to find on Punic sites this tripartite design characteristic of Semitic religious architecture',[121] are erroneous and rely on the opinions of those who have strived hard to fabricate tripartite layouts of sorts that mirror biblical descriptions. By saying this, I am *not* adopting a minimalist stance towards the Sardinian data, aware that they could be helpful to identify what might be missing elements from the parent culture in the Phoenician homeland. Nonetheless, I *do* fail to see clear tripartite divisions at the *mastio* of Monte Sirai, at Nora (*Alto Luogo*), at the putative temple of Demeter (Tharros), and at Capo San Marco, while the reconstructions of the remains at Antas are forced and therefore not convincing. Indeed, a case for seeing a religious building at the Temple of Demeter (Tharros), which ultimately rested on a consideration of the plan, cannot be made. Speculative is also the reconstruction of a "Semitic" plan at the site of the *Tempio a Pianta Semitica* at Tharros: although a parallel could, in theory, be drawn between this site and the complex at the Ma'abed at Amrith (**3.1.2**) where a shrine is enclosed in a square basin of water lined with porticos, I find the data at Tharros so thin and unreliable as to stretch the analogy too far; besides, it appears that the final layout of the Tharros site would post-date Amrith by at least five centuries!

From the foregoing analysis it is clear that no order is apparent in the data considered and that all the parallels sought with the Phoenician homeland have been entirely forced. The major exception to this conclusion is the *Ma'abed* at Nora (**3.8.8**) which would be perfectly at home at Amrith in the last quarter of the sixth century BC

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[121] Also Bisi (1978: 13) referring to Moscati: 'Gli elementi di tradizione orientale nella planimetria dei templi punici, quali sono testimoniati specialmente in Sardegna, si riconducono tutti, sia pure con alcune varianti e modificiazioni locali, allo scheme del santuario tripartitio, cioè con i vani succedentisi in senso assiale [...]'

(Pesce 1955). As at Aïn el-Hâyat (**3.1.1**), serpents crown the architrave atop a winged disc: this is an iconographic motif which we have interpreted as a symbol of religious significance for the Phoenicians, and we have no reason not to suppose that it served a similar function at this Sardinian site. Indeed, it is on this very basis that the religious nature of the reconstruction proposed by Pesce (1955) be defended with all the limitations that such a supposition imposes: we are in the dark as to what was housed in the shrine that stood here. Also, we do not know whether this monument, at the tip of a low headland, was built here in complete isolation or not; the adjoining edifice, the so-called Temple of Eshmun-Esclapius, is later in date, probably by about three centuries. There is one other point which should be highlighted, however, and that is the orientation of the shrine. Pesce does not say whether the monument was open on the seaward side or not. Either reconstruction is interesting: if it was open to the landward side the shrine would have had the sea as a backdrop, recalling in a sense the *Ma'abed* at Amrith which rises out of the water; if it was open to the seaward side the shrine would have been visible to anyone approaching land from the sea.

To this idea of perception of the coastal landscape is linked the cave site on Isola Tavolara in Sardinia (**3.8.9**). The case presented by Marco Amucano (1992) where the sanctification of coastal locales is inextricably linked with navigation is stimulating; nevertheless, the argument can be taken much further to strengthen the case made and to show that his suggestions could work as well for a number of other sites. The discussion is relegated to the third part of this chapter, below (**4.6**)

If we bring into our study other sites discussed in CHAPTER III – Strumpu Bagoi (Narcao), Temple K (Tharros), Monte Sirai, the Temple of the Doric half-columns (Tharros) – which are clearly neither "high" nor tripartite in plan, one common element is easily discerned: the remains consist of, or include, a rectangular space, deep more than it is wide, reached by a flight of a few steps from the short side; they all follow the same orientation (NW-SE) except Temple K which is aligned W-E. But apart from this observation, the sites diverge in detail: at Monte Sirai, for instance, the shrine is not elevated but set at the level of the floor, thus recalling the offering tables of Tas-Silg in Malta and of Kition-Kathari in Cyprus discussed above,

and reinforcing the impression that this constituted an important aspect of Phoenician and Punic religious architecture; but at Temple K, the platform with Egyptianizing moulding at the back of the room is elevated (**FIGURE 108**), and so is the platform at Strumpu Bagoi (**FIGURE 101**); for the Temple of Doric half-columns the aedicule or altar proposed by scholars is hypothetical. Some of the dimensions in these structures reveal a pattern which might be more than fortuitous and the sexagesimal system argued for the Zurrieq Tower in Malta would appear to have been in use in these Sardinian sites too: the room attached to the chapel at Strumpu Bagoi has external dimensions of side 3 m.; the chapel itself measures 6 m. by 3 m., so the ratio is 2:1, as it is at Monte Sirai where the shrine and hall measure about 10 by 5 m. overall, and the shrine is one-third the entire length of the monument. At Temple K, the alleged *naos* is set in a rectangular plan, so it has two-thirds the length of the complex. But despite the foregoing similarities, it is difficult to argue that these places shared an exactly similar function because the material retrieved within, when this was noted, is not related. So rather than pursuing this analysis which cannot lead us any further other than to revise earlier pronouncements on the 'Punic insensibility for symmetry' (*la nota insensibilità punica per la simmetria*: Barreca in *MS II*: 39), I will turn my attention to those sites for which sufficient material exists to place them in the context of other sites discussed in this work, and to highlight those aspects which mark them out as Semitic and Sardinian rather than Greek.

The site of Bithia in the locality known as Torre di Chia in Sardinia provided sufficient evidence to argue conclusively that the building uncovered here was a place devoted to religious ritual, a temple (**3.8.2**). The sandstone statue (**PLATE 17**) and the terracotta statuettes (**PLATE 18**) constitute the richest symbolic repertoire from the site, where size and gestures were taken as criteria to distinguish, with a certain degree of confidence, cult image from votary (**FIGURES 84, 85**). The layout of the building could not be used to infer as much, because the amount of information about it is limited indeed, and the precise findspot of the statue is not known. Having said that, however, I think it is clear that the situation of the platform [1] in the inner half of the building, placed in line with the main axis opposite the doorway (**FIGURE 81**), would suggest it was meant to house the object which focussed the attention of worshippers

inside the building; in this regard, it is justifiable to think that the object of attention was the sandstone statue itself. Moreover, the attributes of the statue, as far as we are allowed to make out from the worn surface which would have originally been stuccoed, allow us to identify the personage with the Egyptian dwarf-god Bes by reference to an iconographic schema common in Cyprus and the Punic West (Wilson 1975): the figure is grotesque with squat legs, naked apart from a belt (*perizoma*) around his loins; he is flat faced with fleshy cheeks, a beard, and a moustache, and he wears a headdress, most probably the characteristic plumed crown (Taramelli 1933-1934, P. Agus 1983). The snake being clasped in the left hand is a feature which does not appear in Egypt before the Ptolemaic period (305-30 BC), while the belt at the loins is characteristic of the Egyptian Saitic period (664-525 BC), facts which have induced Veronica Wilson to date the figure to about the third century BC, thereby lowering the high chronology proposed by Sardinian archaeologists (Pesce 1961: fig. 64; Barreca 1986: 137).[122]

The primary role of Bes in Egyptian mythology was that of protector against serpents and scorpions; in fact, he is seen carrying the hieroglyph representing protection. He was also associated with fertility and childbirth, and thus popular with women, especially during the Ptolemaic period (*DAE*: 53-54). In Phoenicia, we encountered Bes at Kharayeb (**3.2.2**), portrayed in the form of a demon strangling two serpents with his bare hands (**PLATE 4a**). It is common opinion that the Phoenician Bes took over these functions (Lipinski 1995a: 323) and that he should be identified with Eshmun, the Phoenician god of healing, who corresponds to Aesculapius in the *interpretatio Graeca* on a second-century trilingual inscription from Sardinia (*CIS* I, 143; *ICO* Sard. 9) (Culican 1968: 93). But I do fail to see how his healing function could be apparent from Phoenician seals where Bes is seen walking preceded by a snake, as Culican (1968: 94) contended. The discovery of sandstone statues at Fordongianus and at Santa Gilla in Cagliari, similar to our example from Bithia (Pesce 1961: plates 65-66) does not help because the context of discovery is not clear. In my opinion, it is the contextual data available at Bithia *alone* that strongly indicates

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122 P. Agus (1983) dated the statue 'al pieno period romano', that is, after 238 BC. He was unaware of the study by Wilson (1975), and references in Culican (1968: 93).

that Bes had healing powers for the Sardinians on the eve of the Roman take-over and probably later: the position of the arms on the bell-shaped bodies has suggested to a medical specialist that these are images of votaries who are pointing out the ailing part of their body to the god and asking for divine intervention (Galeazzi 1986).[123]

But at Bithia the campaniform statuettes were not the only offerings being made: there were also numerous terracotta representations of anatomical parts including legs and limbs with holes for suspension, and a small number of hand-made terracotta figurines — hardly mentioned in the literature (e.g. Moscati 1993a: 100-108) — which depart from the wheel-thrown examples mentioned earlier (Pesce 1968: 331-332, figs 15, 29). The rendering of the figures is more brutal, but the result is expressive, and the same message is conveyed: following common opinion, Peter van Dommelen (1997a: 318) has suggested that these figures represent a 'local invention' that develops in isolation without any external circulation, a coroplastic art which borrows from Italic models and adapts traditional Punic types which are prevalent in Bithia. It is tempting to read more into this idea and see a change in the type of ritual that lingered at Bithia well into the second century AD, as is attested by the bilingual inscription which commemorates work carried out here sometime between 160-180 AD (*ICO*: Sard. Npu 8): corroborative evidence comes from the fact that Taramelli lifted anatomical votives and nothing else from the temple in his excavations of the 1930s, suggesting that these were the last things deposited there (thus, a primary context), while the deposit of campaniform, wheel-made terracottas in the midden outside the temple was clearly covered over by a layer of blackish sand over which lay the anatomical votives (Pesce 1968: fig. 15; **Table 3.9**). But the dangers of reading a clear sequence in a secondary deposit are obvious, so the suggestion should better be left open.

One last word should be said about the plan of the building: unfortunately, the plans available are neither clear about the extent of the remains to the east, nor the orientation (**FIGURES 81-83**). It is difficult to classify the ground plan as "typically

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[123] In view of the fact that no other finds can be quoted from elsewhere to suggest that the presence of the transcendent at Bithia can be inferred because of these statuettes, it is odd to see that two research aids (*DCPP*: 69; Lipinski 1995a) fail to mention these figures in connection with Bes.

Punic" because the design could have undergone changes in Roman times: the design is not organic and it is not symmetrical around the major axis, while the wall stumps and shadow-outlines in the only plan available suggest different constructional phases. The building could be classified as tripartite (Wilson 1975: 91) only if the space outside the entrance is included as an integral part of the structure, which it probably was because actual free floor-space between the 'entrance' and the platform [1] is restricted by the various installations [2] - [7]; but otherwise it is bipartite and the 'entrance' is down a flight of steps rather than up, as in the Sardinian cases mentioned earlier. I do fail to see similarities, however, between the plan here and that of Capo San Marco at Tharros (**3.8.12**; **FIGURE 104**), as suggested by Pesce (1968: 325) where the design is "broad" rather than "long". Similarities with sites elsewhere, both within Sardinia and without, cannot be cited, unless the rectangular plan of platform [1] (measuring 4 by 3 m.) is mirrored in the sites mentioned earlier; but there is no clear answer.

At Monte Sirai (**3.8.6**), in the coastal plain of Sulcis, a room was identified as a shrine on account of a statuette and other objects recovered within, and a votive inscription on a bronze plaque recovered from an adjacent room. The building constitutes the largest edifice on the "acropolis", and is known in the literature as the *Mastio* (**FIGURES 89-90**), so the label "temple" is justified. Stratum B inside the shrine, constitutes the earliest evidence for cult practice on this site, and was dated to the third or second century BC; no more chronological precision is available from the published accounts. The building is essentially divided into two rectangular halls [6], [9], separated by a low-lying wall; the end of each hall is divided into two small rooms: one [8] was clearly the main focus of the building, a shrine where the cult object was placed, while [10] had a construction which was probably an offering table or altar; [7] revealed only the inscription, while the contents of [11] are not clear. It is difficult to bring into the discussion any other site to establish the religious nature of the remains in a more conclusive way. In plan the site would recall the divisions on the podium at the contemporary Eastern Temple at Oumm el-'Amed in Lebanon (**3.2.3, FIGURES 23, 26a**) where the inner part of what we suppose to have been a *cella* is divided into two unequal spaces; but nothing else links the two sites, so perhaps we

would rather not read too much in the analogy. For the finds discovered inside the shrine (Stratum B), a mixture of Greek and Punic prototypes is claimed. The terracotta protome of a male is clearly Punic (**PLATE 16b**):[124] this findspot at Monte Sirai is of interest because with the exception of a similar protome fragment from Antas (*Antas 1969*: plate 39), protomes have always turned up in funerary contexts. The protome is made from a mould: the face is serene, with a long tapering beard divided into two sections by a groove; the hair is decorated by stamped spirals. It is difficult to tell whether this is the image of a deity placed here as a votive gesture, as is commonly held (Ciasca 1988a), but the occurrence of identical ones in places as far apart as Utica and Cádiz, produced following well fixed rules, suggests exactly this (Lancel 1995a: 340).[125] The two female heads each carrying an incense-burning bowl (*kernophoroi*) (*MS II*: plate 19) are at home in the Punic West, where they are usually found in a cultic context associated with the Greek goddess Demeter, as at Strumpu Bagoi (**3.8.11**, see below).[126] The cult image (**PLATE 19**), however, has roots outside Greece: the rigid hieratic style is characteristically Eastern, and the prominent ears recall an Egyptianizing trait popular with Phoenician coroplasts; but the closest stylistic parallel is found on a relief at Zincirli in Northern Syria, a place where Phoenicians are known to have been active, and where monumental inscriptions were written in Phoenician rather than Aramean (Garbini 1966: 108-113, plate 50). A leading specialist (Moscati 1996: 17-21) has noted that the statue would, therefore, pre-date its context of retrieval by about two or three centuries: since the stone is local, a craftsman working at nearby Sulcis in an Oriental tradition is taken to explain its origin (Moscati 1996: 17-21). In my opinion, what the statue ultimately shows is how the locals were tenaciously holding on to their Semitic roots, at a time when Rome was quickly extending its power over all of Carthage's possessions. Ultimately, the site remained as Punic as the script used to commemorate the deity. Recent opinion claims that she was Astarte (*MS 1992*: 41-42) following a suggestion made by Barreca in his first preliminary report (*MS II*: 73). Although there is a resemblance between

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[124] A protome differs from a mask in that it does not have perforations for the eyes and mouth; see Ciasca 1988a.

[125] Similar masks are known in the Levant, but two identical ones are known from sixth-century funerary contexts in Utica in Tunisia (C. Picard 1967: 29, plate XI, fig. 38) and from a tomb at Punta de Nao in Cádiz (Martín Ruiz 1995: fig. 159).

[126] A similar example is shown in **PLATE 20c.**

the statue at Monte Sirai and a bronze representation of a seated personage inscribed with an eighth-century dedication to the 'enthroned Astarte' from El Carambolo in Spain (*DCPP*: fig. 35),[127] the presence of the *kernophoroi* in the shrine point to Demeter. Assimilation between the deities is a strong possibility as we will argue in the discussion of the Spanish sites below. As for the alleged "baetyl" from Stratum A, the unclear nature of the archaeological context hinders an interpretation: citing a 1.47 m.-high monolith from Mogador (Jodin 1966: 52, plate 16), as is commonplace (Moscati 1996: 24; Rossignoli 1992), is of no help to defend the sacred nature of the stone, because there is nothing especially cultic in the archaeological context of the Mogador pillar. If I would venture an explanation for the situation inside the shrine, I would rather link the discovery of the "baetyl" at such a high level to disturbances in the adjacent room (**FIGURE 90**: [7]) where the inscription was found: to me the scar on the bronze plaque located *only* where the name of the deity would have been, smacks more of intentional mutilation than of corrosion.

The reference to Demeter at Monte Sirai brings us to the last site for which, despite the mediocre publication, a modest case was made in CHAPTER III for seeing a small building, a chapel, set aside for religious ritual, to which was attached a shrine where terracottas were deposited. The statuary from Strumpu Bagoi belongs to an iconographic schema which occurs at other Punic sites considered in this work: Monte Sirai in Sardinia, already mentioned, at the Cueva de Es Cuieram on Ibiza **(3.10.1)**, and at the Carton Chapel in Tunisia **(3.11.1)**. Whereas for the Spanish site, it will be suggested below that the ritual was directed to the Phoenician and Punic goddess Tanit which is assimilated to the Egyptian Isis and the Greek Demeter, at Strumpu Bagoi it is difficult to argue that the cult was anything but Greek: the high *polos*, the torch, the pig, the dove, are all attributes and symbols associated with Demeter (Beschi 1988) (**PLATE 20d**). Having said that, however, the figure with outstretched arms does not appear in the iconography of the goddess, and Culican (1975-1976: 51-52) had pointed out the existence of similar types from private collections in Phoenicia suggesting a date in the fifth century BC. Barreca argued that the *punicità*

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[127] Similar are the style of hair, the prominent ears, the depiction of the breasts, and the position of the left arm which is raised slightly.

of the site at Narcao arises from the plan of the building and the orientation: but although the orientation is similar to Monte Sirai (NW-SE), the plans differ considerably, and where a cult of Demeter is likely at one of the sites already mentioned (Carton Chapel), both the orientation and plan are different.

One final point: that a cult image was placed in the inner half of the chapel, as suggested by Barreca (1983) and repeated by Moscati (1993a: 77), remains unproven. The retrieval of similar images in the shrine suggests that the terracottas were votive offerings representing the deity herself.

Defending the religious nature of the rest of the sites in Sardinia is fraught with difficulties. To look for parallels for the site at Antas (**3.8.1**) is impossible given the nature of the remains, and as will be argued in CHAPTER V, the importance of the site lies in its location and in the corpus of inscriptions recovered within. Capo Sant'Elia outside Cagliari (**3.8.3**) is a wind-swept promontory, the findspot of an inscription from a secondary, and modern context. Only the toponym mentioned in the inscription links it to another site in Sicily, so discussion is better suited in the section which follows. The great podium at Via Malta in Cagliari (**3.8.4**) looks like nothing considered thus far, and Hanson's (1959) suggestion that we have here remains of a "theatre-temple" of Italic type explains the site best. The last site on our list lies on another wind-swept promontory at Capo San Marco, Tharros (**3.8.12**). Its "broad" plan does not turn up in the sites discussed here, so it remains another exception, best explained if the site is considered in the context of what is discussed in another section below (**4.6**).

4.5.4 Sicily.

For the island of Sicily five sites were considered as potential locations where religious ritual took place. The strongest case was made for Grotta Regina (**3.7.2**), high up in Capo Gallo, overlooking the Bay of Mondello and the western approaches to the city of Palermo (**FIGURE 61**): the nature of the Punic inscriptions written in

bitumen on the walls of the cave is clearly dedicatory and religious; the location of the grotto, the depiction of ships on the walls, and a possible reference to the goddess Isis, suggests that the cave was visited by sailors who would invoke deities for safe journeys and protection. Other cave sites, roughly contemporary and similarly located on headlands were considered in CHAPTER III (Grotta del Papa, Sardinia and Gorham's Cave, Spain), but neither provided the type of evidence that was noted for Grotta Regina.[128] It would be legitimate, therefore, to add this grotto to the discussion of the other sites, and to propose in a more convincing way that they were *all* locations where religious ritual took place. But the argument cannot be set out in the required level of detail here and merits separate discussion (**4.6**, below).

For Erice (**3.7.1**) on Monte San Giuliano in NW Sicily, we concluded that *no* evidence whatsoever was uncovered during the excavations earlier this century (Cultrera 1935) that could be used to defend the religious status claimed by some scholars. The suggestion by others (Moscati 1968c, Fantar 1973, Zucca 1989b) that the cult of the 'Astarte of Erice' (the Roman *Venus Erycina*), spread from Monte San Giuliano in Sicily to Sardinia and Africa, where it was located on similarly prominent summits at Capo Sant'Elia (**3.8.3**) and El Kef (or Le Kef) respectively,[129] remains an attractive proposition. However, bar the two inscriptions (*CIS* I, 135 and 140) which mention the toponym *'rk* (Eryx), and which are devoid of a secure archaeological context, evidence for anything substantial more specifically Phoenician, or at least Punic, is unknown. In conclusion, therefore, the nature of these two sites in Sicily and Sardinia remains open and inconclusive. To put it another way: Phoenician or Punic religious sites *could* have existed here but we do *not* know what they looked like.

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[128] In this context, the analogy with Wasta recalled in passing by Xella & Ribichini (1994: 71) is, in my opinion, misplaced: the two sites are only similar in so far as the method of acknowledging the divinity involved writing on the walls of a cave.

[129] The prominent mountain at El Kef, 170 km. south-west of Carthage in Tunisia, has been identified with the Sicca Veneria of the Latin authors where mercenaries had set up camp on their return from Sicily following the disastrous end of the first Carthaginian campaign against Rome. On its 770 m.-high summit, known as the Kasbah, stood a temple to *Venus Erycina*, famous for the sacred prostitution in which the *Punicae faminae* indulged (Valerius Maximus II, 6, 15). The goddess of Eryx was taken to Africa for nine days every year, whence it was taken back to Sicily. Scholars have assumed that the Venus here is to be identified with the Phoenician and Punic Astarte and postulate the existence of a temple here to the Semitic goddess (Gsell 1920: 349; see Fantar 1973: 22-23, Zucca 1989b: 774, Lipinski 1995a: 145, 488).

The same uncertainties can be extended to the remains at the Cappiddazzu on Motya (**3.7.4**). In CHAPTER III, I have argued that the religious function claimed by the excavator for some of the features — the "tri-baetyled altar" and the "sacrificial pits" — was unfounded, and alternative utilitarian explanations were provided. As for the plan of the building, similarities with Kition-Kathari's Temple 1 could, in theory, be claimed (Isserlin 1982: 124): both are essentially rectangular halls divided into three bays and attached to an outer rectangular space (**FIGURES 42, 43a, 69a**). But earlier (**4.3**) we noted that the plan of Temple 1 at Kathari is essentially of Late Bronze Age date, and that as a result we cannot take it to be 'typically Phoenician' of the Iron Age; the analogy, therefore, is out of place, more so because the temporal distinctions are marked and the differences outnumber the similarities. Besides, a tripartite plan is known at Phoenician Toscanos in Spain where the building, admittedly earlier by at least two centuries, was identified as a storehouse on the basis of the numerous amphora sherds and imported ware discovered within (Aubet 1994: fig. 91; Niemeyer 1995: 69). There can be no certainty, therefore, on the nature of the building at Cappiddazzu.

As for the sites on Monte Adranone in the hinterland of the nearby Greek city of Selinus, I concluded in the preceding chapter (**3.7.3**) that the story painted by the excavators does not stand up to scrutiny, and the alleged "baetyls" would rather be seen as plinths for roof supports than aniconic images of a transcendent being. Besides, I fail to see significant similarities between the plan of the two buildings and any other site discussed in the present work. Ultimately, I also fail to see anything "Phoenician" or "Punic" at Monte Adranone. The proposition by De Miro and Fiorentini that the Carthaginians decided to consecrate their take-over of the Greek site by the foundation of the two Punic temples rests on an interpretation of the two buildings which has been brought into question and found to be untenable; in other words, the historical reading of the site presented by the excavators does not yield to the archaeological evidence. As Fiorentini (1982-1983: 186) herself admits to a pertinent question by Antonia Ciasca (1982-1983), with the exception of the Siculo-Punic coins, 'materiale archeologico punico [...] non ne abbiamo a Monte Adranone'; I honestly think that further comments are superfluous.

As with the previous three sites, no movable finds were recorded at the site of Solunto on Monte Catalfano (**3.7.5**) that would allow us to present a strong case for seeing a religious installation there. Although we recalled earlier that the three upright slabs defy a utilitarian explanation, and that the entire set-up recalls, albeit admittedly rather vaguely, representations on funerary stelae from Punic tophets, the matter remains unconvincing: similarities with other installations elsewhere in Sicily cannot be cited once Motya is robbed of its "tri-baetyled" altar, and the three tapering "Punic baetyls" on an altar at the sanctuary of *Zeus Meilichios* at Selinus (Tusa 1984: 13), are interpreted as barriers or parapets (German *Wangen*) (Ciasca 1993: 234 n. 6).[130]

4.5.5 Spain.

In comparison with Sicily, the Spanish sites reviewed in CHAPTER III provided more spectacular finds, on the basis of which stronger cases could be made to defend the religious nature claimed for them. Yet, two of the sites consist of natural caves (Gorham's Cave and Cueva de Es Cuieram), while a third (Illa Plana) lacks any structural remains, so conclusions reached here cannot be used to defend the nature of other Punic sites where the case rests solely on the ground plan of the structural remains. As was pointed out earlier, Gorham's Cave (**3.9.1**) at the base of the mountainous headland at Gibraltar, will be considered in a separate section below (**4.6**).

The Cueva de Es Cueiram (**3.10.1**), high up in the mountainous region overlooking the nearby bay of San Vicente, has been identified as a Punic sanctuary on the basis of an abundance of terracotta statuary and an inscription which commemorates the dedication of a statue to the Semitic goddess Tanit. The most frequent type of terracotta is the campaniform figure, between 9 and 18 cm. high, fashioned from a two-piece mould composed of a female head which sits rigidly on a

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130 A recent study continues to support the earlier orthodox view of a 'großen zentralen Altar mit seinen charakteristischen Baityloi' (Mertens 1997: 315, plate 41). Mertens defends the Punic characteristics of temples at Greek Selinus by reference to two pillars that are found outside the

bell-like base (**PLATE 21c, d**).[131] All the heads are rendered in a similar fashion: underneath a high cylindrical headdress or *kalathos*, the hairstyle in continuous waves above the forehead descends in two bands or tresses behind the ears onto the shoulders, to a level with the breasts. The high headdress, plain or decorated with rosettes or stars, is Greek not Phoenician,[132] a motif which is seen on the *kernophoroi* and on the representations of Demeter on mould-made terracotta plaques from the same cave.[133] But the prominent ears on some of the terracottas,[134] recall a fashion which is Oriental, as on an earlier series depicting seated pregnant women wearing the Egyptian wig (*klaft*) (**PLATE 3b**),[135] or the fifth-century terracottas from Tyre depicting a seated female on a throne (**PLATE 3a**).[136] The campaniform bases are similar in form but differ in decorative details. Maria Aubet's (1982: 14, 38) ingenious suggestion that a pair of wings act as a cloak wrapped round the figure in Egyptianate fashion — a motif which, like the lotus flower, is peculiar to the iconography of the goddess Isis (*DAE*: 142-143) — has much to commend it, despite recent signs of pessimism (Xella & Ribichini 1995: 56): first, because the scheme of representation was known to the Phoenicians in their homeland,[137] and second, because a representation on a stela from the fifth level at the tophet of Sousse in Tunisia (Cintas 1947: 56, fig. 116) is identical to the statuettes from Es Cuieram, with the important addition, however, that the head is crowned with Hathor's symbols, the

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entrance to the alleged Punic temple at Kerkouane (**3.11.3**), that in turn recall the set-up outside Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.

131 Aubet 1982: plates 7-19.

132 I do not see any similarities between the headdresses that sit, or are carried, on the heads of these terracottas (which are more like inverted buckets or frustums), and the cylindrical cap that is clearly tucked down over the heads of the figures represented on the stelae at Oumm el-'Amed and the terracottas of Kharayeb, discussed earlier.

133 Aubet 1982: plates 21, 25. The examples from Cueva de Es Cuieram include all the iconographic motifs which are associated with the Greek goddess Demeter: the torch, the pig, and the pomegranate. See Beschi 1988: 846.

134 Example, Aubet 1982: plates 11, 29. 1.

135 One example was found in the chapel at Sarepta (Pritchard 1978: fig. 140).

136 The exact findspot of this series is unknown, but the region of Tyre is likely. They are preserved in a private collection in Beirut and have been published by Moscati (1990: 51-52).

137 This is a point which Aubet does not raise. As evidence, I have in mind the representation on either side of the model of a shrine or *naos* allegedly found in Sidon but preserved at the Istanbul museum (discussed above **4.2.2**): a female personage, crowned with a disc, is seen in profile with outstretched arms lined with wings; both hands grasp a lotus flower in full bloom (Aimé-Giron 1934: 38-39, plate 4; **FIGURE 28c, PLATE 10a**). In Egyptian myth, Isis breaths life into the mummified Osiris by spreading her wings over him; on the limestone model, the figure appears to be affording divine protection to the sphinx throne inside the *naos*.

sun-disc and cow's horns, that Isis adopts.[138] The rest of the motifs which appear in the space between the folded wings on the Cuieram terracottas — the lunar crescent and the solar disc, and the caduceus — are symbols which appear repeatedly on contemporary funerary stelae from Punic tophets; they are also common to Phoenician religious iconography.[139] Ultimately, the particulars are Greek and Semitic, the whole, in an island then controlled by Carthage, was Punic and Iberian.[140]

From Es Cuieram the excavators also lifted four terracotta statuettes representing a figure seated in a throne (Aubet 1982: plate 20) (**PLATE 21b**). The heads are similar to the previous series but the body is rendered schematically, no hands and feet are attached, and appears like a bottle tucked inside the chair. Although Greek prototypes have been cited for this terracotta-type (Aubet 1982: 27), enthroned personages on ritual scenes are not unknown in the Phoenician Levant (see above **4.2.2**) and one terracotta statuette of a figure on a throne from Tyre clasps a lotus flower (Moscati 1990: 52) (**PLATE 3a**), while the "bottle-idol" is an ubiquitous motif on Punic tophet stelae and other art (**PLATE 21a**).[141] It is tempting to hypothesise, as Lipinski (1995a: 426) has done, that at Es Cuieram the winged campaniform figures depict Semitic images which become anthropomorphized under the influence of Greek culture, with the seated examples shown at a stage removed from the extreme stylization and abstraction that had been characteristic of Carthaginian funerary art

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[138] Further corroborative evidence comes from Carthage where a "priestess" is shown on a fourth-century BC marble sarcophagus lid from the cemetery of Sainte-Monique (*I Fenci 1988*: 297), wearing a long pleated robe with its lower part enveloped by two large wings; a falcon's head crowns a veil which frames the face of the figure. As Lancel (1995a: 326, figs 194-195) has pointed out, the falcon and the crossed wings are attributes of the Egyptian deity Isis-Nephthys. Isis also appears on a hatchet-razor from a fourth-century BC tomb in Carthage (Picard 1967: plate 18); she also appears with Horus on a mounted scarab from Tharros (*I Fenici 1988*: 385).

[139] The lotus flower on a stem is held by figures on representations, dating to the Persian Period, discovered in the votive cache at Kharayeb (Kaoukabani 1973: plate 11.2-3). About the celestial symbolism of the star and the disc-and-crescent motifs on Phoenician seals, see Culican 1968: 55ff. The caduceus is mentioned in **4.6.3** below.

[140] Representations of a winged personage on a campaniform body appears on pottery of the Iberian Levant; Spanish archaeologists see her as the 'Iberian Tanit' (e.g. Blázquez 1995: 159). See Pericot 1979: figs 109, 150.

[141] The association of the "bottle idol", sacred *uraei*, and disc on a sixth-century BC gold medallion from a grave in the Dermech necropolis at Carthage (*I Fenici 1988*: 374) and on a stele from the tophet at Carthage, has led Culican (1968: 76-77) to conclude that, 'there can be no doubt that this shape represents high divinity'. For the development of the "bottle idol" on the stelae from Sousse, see Cintas 1947: 50ff, fig. 67).

between the eighth and sixth centuries BC (Lancel 1995a: 331).[142] But the unclear nature of the archaeological context at Es Cuieram, coupled with the impossibility of reading any sequence in the deposits "excavated" at the beginning of the century, prevents us from verifying such an attractive supposition.

As to the identity of the transcendant being to whom these terracottas were offered, the suggestion has been made that it was the Semitic goddess Tanit, mentioned in the second-century BC Punic inscription retrieved inside the cave, who takes on the attributes of the Egyptian Isis and the Greek Demeter (Aubet 1982; Lipinski 1995a: 205).[143] Direct association between Tanit and Demeter is available from Carthage if we take an observation made by Father Delattre earlier this century to be correct;[144] moreover, the reference to 'Tanit of Good Fortune' written in Neo-Punic letters on the bronze plaque recalls the epithet by which Isis is known to the Latin authors.[145] The case is a strong one, and I would argue that inside the cave sanctuary of Es Cuieram we have evidence of the syncretistic nature of religion in an area of the Punic world that accepted Greek cultural traits but still clutched on to its Semitic roots.

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142 Pierre Cintas (1947: 68-69) had argued thus when he interpreted the "bottle idols" on the stelae he excavated at Sousse.

143 On the Hellenization of Isis under the Ptolemies, see F. Dunand 1973: 66-108. On pp. 85-87 the author discusses how Isis is assimilated into Demeter. Also, *LIMC Vi*: 791-793.

144 In his report on the discovery of a cache of terracotta statuettes representing Demeter holding a torch and a pig, from an area known as Sainte-Monique in Carthage, Delattre noted that on one of the busts, at the back, there was incised the sign of Tanit: 'L'emblème de Tanit quit se voit au revers d'un des bustes de Déméter semble bien confirmer l'identité de la déese punique et de la déese grecque.' (1923: 365). Yet, there is more evidence. A relationship between the occurrence of Isis at the tophet at Sousse and the majority of dedications there, admittedly from an earlier level, to *Tanit pene Baal* ('Tanic face of Baal') could imply assimilation. Evidence is available to show that the Phoenicians identified Isis with Astarte: a statuette of Isis nourishing Horus bears a Phoenician dedication to Astarte (Culican 1968: 69 n. 92); in an invocation to the goddess Isis in a papyrus of the early second century AD, she is equated to the Astarte of Sidon (Grainger 1991: 77). On the fifth-century BC stele of Yehawmilk, the Lady of Byblos is seen wearing the sun-disc between cow horns (PLATE 6a), symbols of the goddess Hathor to whom Isis was assimilated from the New Kingdom onwards (*DAE*: 142-143). Now if we accept that the reference on the ivory plaque from Sarepta to Tanit-Astarte (*tnt` 'štrt*) implies more than mere juxtaposition of divine names but syncretism of the two goddesses (Pritchard 1978: 107), as at Tas-Silg in Malta (Frendo 1996; see also Lipinski 1995a: 201-202), then the association Astarte-Tanit-Isis appears a strong probability. For Fantar (1997: 1184) the wings of Tanit symbolise protection. On the relationship Isis-Tanit and Hermes, see Picard 1967: 109.

145 See F. Dunand 1973: 93. Also Lipinski (1995a: 62-64) on the Greek Tyche and the Roman Fortune.

As for the site on the 'flat island' that once stood sentinel at the entrance of the Phoenician harbour and city of Ibiza (**FIGURE 117**), no Punic structures of note were uncovered during the excavations at the beginning of the century to go with the hoard of statuettes lifted from a deep pit. In CHAPTER III (**3.10.2**), it was argued that although the statuary could conceivably be related to cult practices, they were not in a context which could be established as religious, without reference to elsewhere. Wheel-thrown, campaniform or ovoid statuettes to which defining elements of the body (arms and stylized male sexual organs) are added in barbotine or incised (female sexual organs) (**PLATE 22**)[146] are known from funerary tophet contexts at Carthage and in Punic Sicily, and from the Temple of Bes at Bithia in Sardinia (see **4.5.4**).[147] But although the similarity in shape is obvious, and prototypes can be pinned down in the Levant,[148] the details reveal a coroplastic art which has strong regional differences, where no one figure resembles the other (Moscati 1972: 106, 1980: 287). Illa Plana *could* have been the site of a sanctuary or any other religious building, even if perhaps not a tophet as Picard (1967: 108) and Lancel (1995a: 82) assert, but the evidence at our disposal *cannot* prove this claim.

4.5.6 Tunisia.

Despite being home to Tyre's most famous possession, Tunisia has not revealed any of the evocative temples or sanctuaries that one would expect of an ancient city like Carthage, at the head of a prosperous empire whose power in the

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146 Hachuel & Marí 1988: Class IIIA, plates 17-20.

147 For Carthage, see Ferron & Aubet 1974, and Moscati 1987; for Motya, Moscati 1972; for Bithia in Sardinia, Uberti 1973. An example was excavated in small fragments from a third-century BC floor level of the cult complex attached to the tophet at Monte Sirai in Sardinia *MS I*: 96-99, plates 50-51, *MS III*: 115-116. Also note that the painted decoration which crosses over the campaniform body is found on a "bottle idol" on a stele from the tophet at Sousse in Tunisia (Cintas 1947: fig. 87).

148 Prototypes can be seen in the Middle Kingdom Egyptian "mourning pots" on display at the Petrie Museum in London, and in similar terracottas in Bronze Age and Archaic Cyprus: Ferron & Aubet 1974: 41, 43, 155-165; Bisi 1979: 20-26. Of particular interest in this context are a group of wheel-made terracotta statuettes from a Cypriot sanctuary of the Archaic period in the district known as Kommisariato in Limassol: the similarities with the Punic examples are striking and Karageorghis (1977b: 60-61, 66, plate 21.12) used to show the extent of Phoenician penetration into Cyprus at the time. It is difficult, however, to tell in which direction influences were travelling, and the frequency with which the figures occur in Phoenician Carthage and later on in the west, shows a level of popularity which was not attained elsewhere in the Mediterranean.

western and middle Mediterranean became a fact to contend with from the sixth century. Only two of the sites discussed in CHAPTER III are located in Carthage, while the other two are found on the very edge of the Cap Bon peninsula. Their dating, tentative and relative, places them in a temporal context which is essentially Punic not Phoenician, when Carthage was slowly but surely absorbing the Greek culture of southern Italy and Sicily, eclipsing features of the Oriental tradition from which it claimed noble origins.

The site at Ras ed-Drek (**3.11.4**), perched dangerously on a tongue of rocky land below Cap Bon, revealed neither the finds nor a plan that would allow us to defend the religious nature its excavator so adamantly promotes. Only the Classical toponym of the headland of which it forms part — the *Hermea akra* of the Greeks — provides a link with a site already discussed, the grotto at the base of the island called Tavolara on the east coast of Sardinia (**3.8.9**) and known to the ancient geographers as 'the island of Hermes' (*Hermaea nesos*). An attempt at describing that link is made below (**4.6**).

Further down the coast from Ras ed-Drek, the town of Kerkouane (**3.11.3**) yielded evidence which Mh. Fantar considers the largest Punic sanctuary known in the West. In CHAPTER III I have argued that the analogies drawn with other sites to defend the religious nature of the edifice are misplaced, and that one part of the complex can be seen as a workshop for the production of terracottas, of the orant type mentioned in connection with the Spanish sites. There is only one other site, earlier by a century or more, already discussed (**3.3.1.2**: Kition-Bamboula, 3rd Phase, see **4.3**), where terracotta plaque figurines discovered in a kiln induced the excavator to consider the context as a religious one; but the extent of Phoenician influence at that site is still an open question, and besides, the differences between the two complexes far outnumber the similarities. It is tempting to read more into the small bowls recovered from the back yard in association with animal bones, if only because at a contemporary site in Phoenicia (Kharayeb: **3.2.2**), such a datum was taken to be evidence for votive offerings; but if a sceptical stand is taken, the case for Kerkouane remains unconvincing.

For the two sites in Carthage, the Carton Chapel (**3.11.1**) and the small edifice at Sidi-bou-Saïd (**3.11.2**), it was concluded in CHAPTER III, that sufficient evidence is available to present modest cases whereby these two rooms be seen as locations, chapels, set aside for carrying out religious ritual. The cases made can hardly be strengthened further by reference to sites elsewhere because the sites are as unique in their ground plan as in the finds that were retrieved within. Similarities in the structures uncovered can only be sought for the benches that run along the walls: this and the bent-entry layout recall the earliest phase of the chapel at Sarepta (**3.2.4**), admittedly earlier by about six hundred years, but the differences are too many to justify the analogy; also, the rectangular installation outside the chapel at Sidi-bou-Saïd recalls the type of low offering table mentioned in conjunction with Kition-Kathari (Temple 1) and Tas-Silg, above (**4.5.2**): but the Tunisian structure is made of brick, while not much of it survives to decide whether its height, a defining feature of the examples cited, was similar.

As for the statuary and finds recovered inside the buildings, those from the Carton Chapel reveal an iconography which is a mixture of Greek and Semitic: the enthroned deity, if so it was, the sphinx, and the lion, are all at home in the Phoenician homeland, while the great grimacing terracotta mask, with gaping eyes and mouth, claims Eastern prototypes but is more a hallmark of Carthaginian coroplastic art from the seventh century (Ciasca 1988a); it is best explained if we suppose, in the wake of Pierre Cintas (1946), that, hanging opposite the doorway (rather than from the lintel: Picard 1967: 16), it had apotropaic powers to ward off evil spirits: this much is suggested by the expressive gestures of the facial features (no doubt accentuated by the flicker of lights inside the chapel), and the fact that all masks known from Carthage, except this one,[149] occur in funerary contexts.[150] The rest of the material,

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[149] Picard (1967: 16) misunderstood Carton (1929: 13) when she says that similar masks were found 'dans cette fouille'. This is not the case for Carton was referring to masks found elsewhere in Carthage and not on this site.

[150] Another two exceptions are known in Sardinia: the protome from the shrine at Monte Sirai already mentioned (**4.5.4**) and a fragment of another from the sanctuary at Antas (*Antas 1969*: plate 39). Masks similar to the example under discussion appear at the tophet in Motya, and in one case the grimacing terracotta is placed above the lid that covers the urn, as if the intention was to protect it (Ciasca 1965: plates 44, 45).

however, is overtly Greek in style and iconography: the representation of Victory is shared between both sites, and at Sidi-bou-Saïd it is crowned by a Gorgon's head, which again turns up at the Carton Chapel in association with the grimacing mask; the statuettes showing females carrying incense-burning bowls are associated with the goddess Demeter, as is the image of a pig discovered buried beneath the floor of the chapel at Sid-bou-Saïd.[151] The representation of the composite being, half monster and half human, at Sidi-bou-Saïd (Merlin 1919: fig. 7), is at home in Punic Carthage and is identified in relation to an iconographic schema which is Greek in general, and Sicilian in particular: Scylla is the fantastic monster which appears with protomes of dogs and a body of a fish (*OCD*: 1374; *LIMC* VIII,ii: 784-792).[152] The terracotta frieze allegedly showing a group of worshippers is Greek in inspiration and composition (Merlin 1919: fig. 6) but need not represent the Dionysiac *thiasos*, as has been suggested by Picard (1968: 284; see *OCD*: 1513). As at contemporary Kharayeb in the Phoenician homeland, and places in the West that fell under the political control of the Carthagian capital, Oriental traits were being modified to accommodate Hellenic ones.

To conclude, one point ought to be highlighted: the ground plan of the chapel at Sidi-bou-Saïd is clearly tripartite, composed of three units of space organised along the major axis of the edifice, so that the overall appearance is "long" rather than "broad". Now, for one scholar who for years has been conducting excavations in Carthage, this plan would suggest that 'the old tripartite layout of the oriental temple, of which King Solomon's was the prototype', survived in Carthage right to the eve of the Roman destruction (Lancel 1995a: 215). I do not deny that the building has a tripartite plan, as I do not deny that this is the *only* site considered in this work to have produced such a division of architectural space. However, in view of what has been already said with regards to Solomon's temple (**4.2.1**), I refrain from generalising on

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151 Delattre had noted that the bowls on top of the busts he uncovered in the cache at Sainte-Monique had clear taces of fire, leading him to believe that they were intended for the burning of incense (1929: 360). In this he was followed by Cintas (1949) and more recently by Lancel (1995a: 347). Similar statuettes were found in Sardinian sites, at Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao (**3.8.11**), and at Monte Sirai (**3.8.6**).

152 Scylla appears on a bronze hatchet-razor from a Punic tomb at Utique (Picard 1967: plate 36), on a Punic sarcophgus, and from Kerkouane a mould for making terracotta plaques with her image was lifted; Fantar (1970: 22-23, plates 19-20) links representations of Scylla with Phoenician and Punic escathology. The mould is dated to not later than 250 BC when Kerkouane was abandoned.

what religious architecture at Carthage owed to Phoenicia, on the basis of this one site, removed in time from an alleged prototype by more than seven centuries.

4.5.7 Concluding remarks

This last reference to Solomon's temple has brought us full-circle back to where we started our inquiry on Phoenician and Punic religious space. The architectural morphology of the monuments outside the Phoenician homeland appears particularly diverse. In Cyprus where Phoenician settlement was permanent, the earliest religious sites at Kathari are large and qualify as temples. Religious space is demarcated from its urban setting by the walls of the temple itself, and in the first two phases, by a vestibule that undoubtedly served as a transitory zone between the mundane and the sacred, where worshippers could be prepared for their religious experience. Purification or cleansing by water could have been a way of negotiating this transitional zone: a well (Floor 3) in the courtyard suggests this. Exit from the temple was through a side door: movement and negotiation of spaces was properly structured, segregation between the initiates in the vestibule and the initiated inside appears the case. Offerings, too would have been made before entering: presumed altars at Kathari (Floors 3 and 2a) were always outside the temple on entering (**FIGURE 42**); for Floor 2 when the old vestibule was changed into workshops, entrance to the temple was through the old exit where an altar was built. Benches were added inside the temple for worshippers; the intercolumniations of the large hall were filled to separate zones, leaving a bent-entry approach towards the divinity and offering table, placed at the end of a narrow hall: as at Sarepta, the dominant axis pulls and focuses attention of the participants. This is where we assume that the ritual focus at Kathari was, first set between a row of columns or pillars then between walls. This is where the offering tables were located right through the temple's history: slabs of stone placed with the level of the floor, suggesting that an officiating priest or celebrant had to stoop down on the knees, bowing in the process, in a gesture of adoration and submission to the transcendant. Such a set-up is recalled further west at

Tas-Silg in Malta, where a monumental slab is sunk level with the floor (**FIGURE 53**). This is the feature that gives an inkling of Phoenician religious space there, where the orientation clearly follows that of an earlier monument and is a few degrees north of west.

By contrast, at Kommos on the southern coast of Crete, Phoenician seafarers placed their tri-pillar shrine inside a local chapel, consisting of a rectangular space lined with platforms or benches (**FIGURES 49, 50**). The shrine was almost level with the floor at the opposite end of the doorway: it was meant to impose alignment, to orientate and focus the attention of worshippers. As at Kathari, the low level suggests that the human body was meant to be lowered and that kneeling formed an essential part of the ritual experience. Through time (Phase 1 to Phase 2) the hearth, on a central axis between the door and the shrine, becomes larger, concealing the tri-pillar shrine from view by rising fumes: the hearth takes over as the symbolic focus, and by Phase 3 the three pillars are transformed into another hearth; the religious space that had accommodated Phoenicians and Greeks at Kommos had been altered.

At Punic sites in Sardinia, religious space is essentially a long architectural unit, deeper than it is wide, with the ritual focus at the further end opposite a central doorway. At Monte Sirai the temple is elevated above the surrounding terrain. Entrance to the two adjacent halls, each the size of Sarepta's chapel, is up a flight of steps (**FIGURE 90**). Movement is apparently unhindered but the shrine is set inside a niche: cult statue and ritual paraphernalia are placed level with the floor, again implying that the required viewpoint was a low one. The chapel at Strumpu Bagoi follows the same scheme, with a long room entered through a flight of steps, but the shrine is placed in a separate spatial unit attached to the chapel; the whole is exceptional. At Bithia, instead, the religious space is broken down into smaller units (**FIGURE 83**): the awareness of the religious experience is sharpened by the cult statue set on a podium opposite, which grows above the participant as movement is directed down some steps and towards it; movement is then hindered by a series of installations, altars or offering tables. The inner half of the space is reserved for the

god: only images of the worshippers were presumably placed nearer to secure continuity of worship.

The religious sites in Punic Sardinia show no concern with the cardinal points but directions north and south of east are preferred.

The ideal of openness symbolized by the uncovered spaces of Persian-period religious sites in the East can only be seen at Nora, where the *Ma'abed* or shrine, apparently isolated, is built on the tip of the headland. By virtue of its position, whether approached from the land or from the sea, the monument appears surrounded by water. Nature is the background, the sea and the encircling hills of the hinterland.

In Tunisia, Punic religious space conforms to the scheme described thus far, of a long deep room with religious focus at one end; benches or platforms are added along the walls. But at Sidi-bou-Saïd the plan is almost square and the entry is through a side wall, across a threshold marked by a potent symbol.

By contrast to this constructed religious space, the Punic settlers at Ibiza and Sicily had cult sites in large natural caves, high up in the hills with views of the sea. Getting to the sites from the coastal plain is difficult, locating the site even more so because the caves are not imposing but attached to the land, and their entrances are concealed from view. The religious space here is not strictly defined, arranged or organized. By virtue of their natural qualities the caves were an appropriate shelter for the god and the worshippers.

I will now turn my attention to a different sort of religious space defined by a permanency and sharp physical definition that transcends any attempt at human construction.

Table 4.1 Chronology of sites.

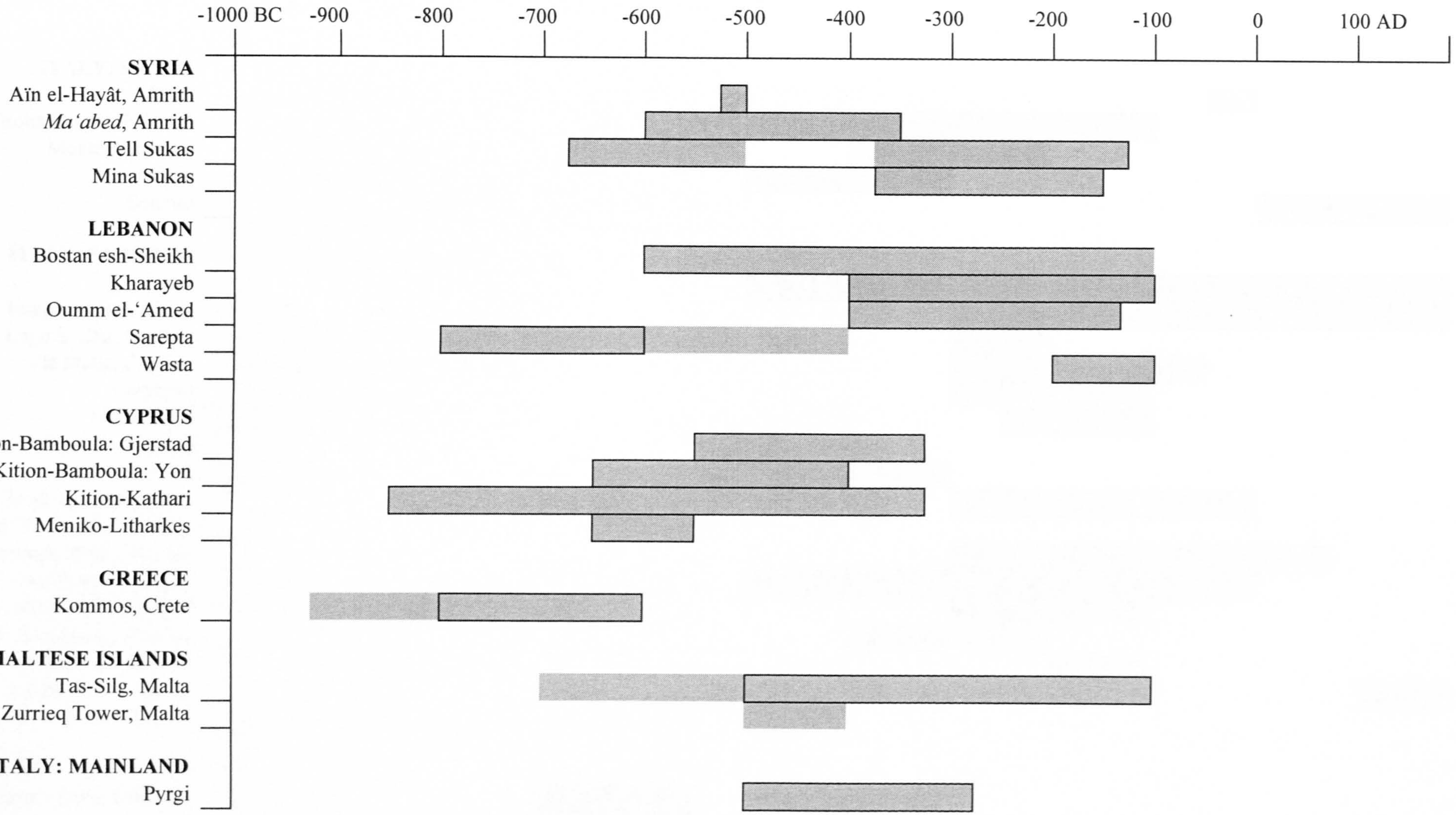

Table 4.1 Chronology of sites (*cont.*).

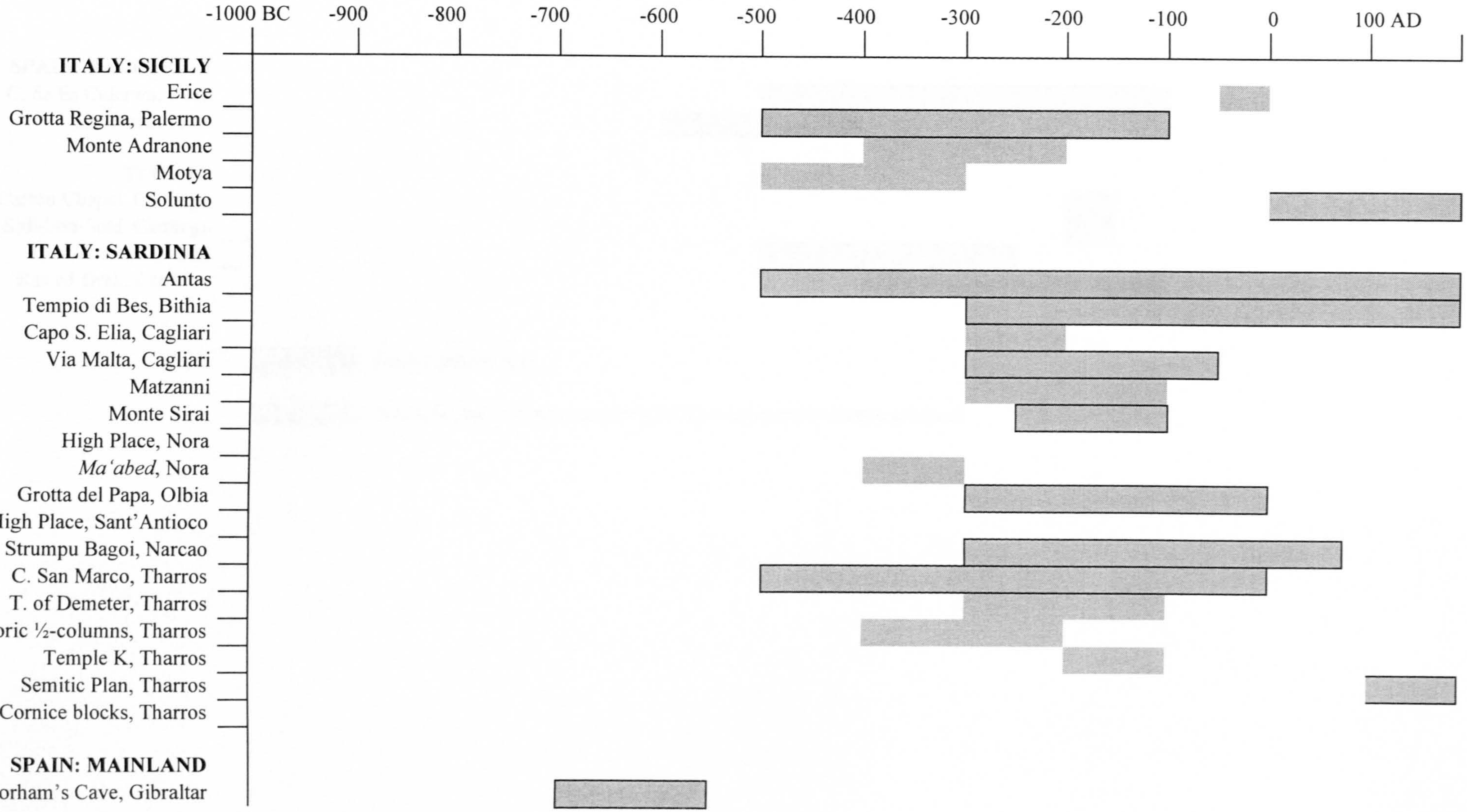

Table 4.1 Chronology of sites (*cont.*).

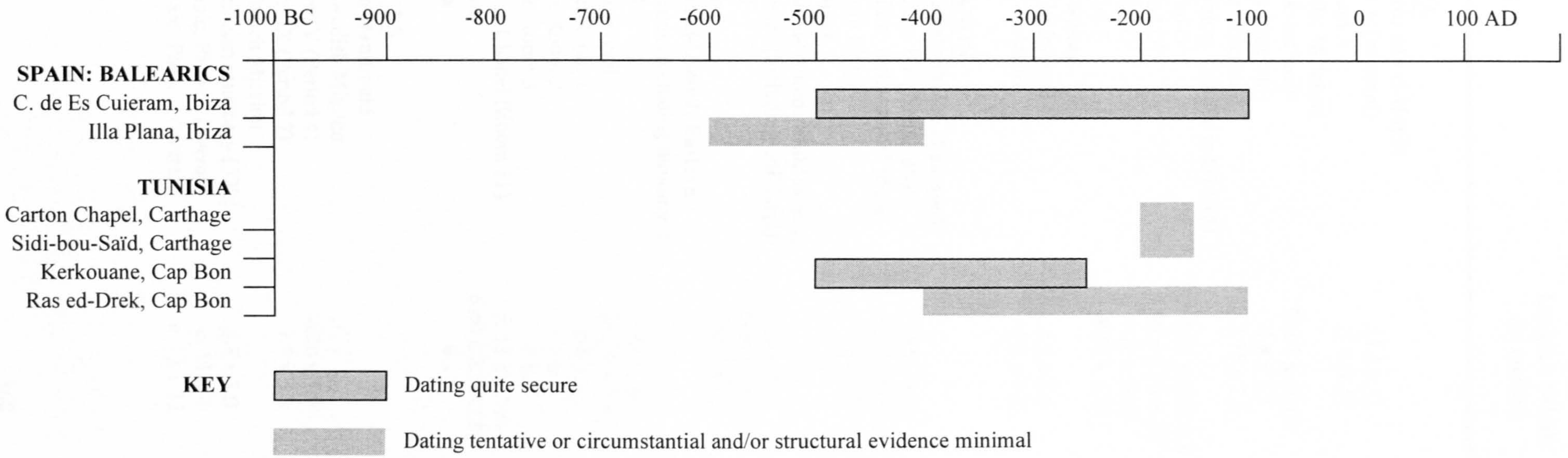

Table 4.2 Measurements and orientation of each site.

SITES	Length x Width (in metres)	Floor Space (in metres²)	Orientation
SYRIA			
Amrith: Aïn el-Hayât			
naos A (external)	[1.5 x 1]	[1.5]	W-E
podium A	3 x [1.5]	[4.5]	
Amrith: *Ma'abed*			
Rock-cut basin	56.03 x 49.03	2747.2	S-N
naos (external)	3.8 x 3.5	13.3	S-N
naos (internal)	2.75 x 2.2	6.05	
Tell Sukas (temple in G14/15)			
Period G³	7.2-7.35 x 4.32-3.8	30	WNW-ESE
Period G²	9.90 x 4.95-5.30	50.2	WNW-ESE
Period G¹	4.20 x 3.20	13.44	NNE-SSW
Period F	8.50 x 4.80	40.8	NW-SE
Mina Sukas			
chapel: internal	3.5 x 2.6	9.1	ESE-WNW
altar enclosure	3.0 x 4.2	12.6	ESE-WNW
LEBANON			
Bostan esh-Sheikh (Eshmun)			
Podium: Babylonian phase	[45 x 45]	[2025]	[diagonals]
Podium: Achaemenid phase	40.0 x 60.40	2436	S-N
Astarte Chapel	11.5 x 10.5	120.75	SW-NE
Kharayeb	?	?	[NW-SE]
Oumm el-'Amed: Milk'ashtart			
Temenos (including buildings)	61 x 56	3416	W-E
Yard	49.50 x 24.00	1188	W-E
Cella	24 x 8.50	204	
Oumm el-'Amed: Eastern			
Temenos (including buildings)	60 x 35	2100	
Yard	35 x 22	770	W-E
Cella: overall	14.50 x 7.80	113.1	WSW-ENE
Cella: Room 1	8.8 x 5.6	49.28	
Cella: Room 2	3 x 2	6	
Cella: Room 3	3 x 3	9	
Throne Chapel (Room 11)	*c.* 12.5 x 9.0	112.5	W-E
Sarepta	6.40 x 2.56-2.88	17	WNW-ESE
Wasta	9 x 5	45	?
CYPRUS			
Kition-Bamboula			
The Swedish Mission			
Room IV (Period 4)	4.00 x 1.90	7.6	SSW-ENE
Room IX (Period 7)	7.7 x 5.5	42.35	E-W
The French Mission			
Phoenician sanctuary [522]	5.8 x 3.0	17.4	?
Archaic: Phase 1 (overall)	*c.* 11 x 4	44	NNE-SSW
Archaic: Phase 2 (overall)	*c.* 12 x 12	144	NNE-SSW

Table 4.2 (*Cont.*) Measurements and orientation of each site.

SITES	Length x Width (in metres)	Floor Space (in metres²)	Orientation
Kition-Kathari (Area II)			
Temple 1: Floors 3-2			
Overall	35 x 22	770	NNW-SSE
Holy-of-holies	2.5 x 22	55	NNW-SSE
Temple 1: Floor 1	?	?	?
Temenos B	23.60 x 19.20	453.1	NNW-SSE
Temple 4: overall	15.5 x 8.9	138	SE-NW
Meniko-Litharkes			
Overall	14.00 x 14.50	203	SW-NE
Room A (inner recess)	2.7 x 2.10	5.67	
Room C	1.4 x 1.80	2.52	
GREECE			
Kommos, Crete			
Temple B: exterior	8.08 x 6.40	51.7	WSW-ENE
Temple B: interior	7.28 x 4.80	34.9	
MALTESE ISLANDS			
Tas-Silg, Malta: overall	c. 90 x 100	9000	ESE-WNW
Structure 45	1.10 x 2.75	3.03	ESE-WNW
Space 4	3.5 x 6.5	22.75	NNE-SSW
Structure 38	? x 4.40	?	SW-NE
Structure 43	[8.50] x 5.0	[72.5]	SW-NE
Zurrieq Tower, Malta			
Exterior	3.1 x 3.1	9.6	diagonals
Interior	2.13 x 2.13	4.6	
ITALY: MAINLAND			
Pyrgi, Santa Severa			
Temple A	34.47 x 23.98	827	ENE-WSW
Temple B	29.7 x 20.0	594	ENE-WSW
ITALY: SICILY			
Erice, Monte San Giuliano	—	—	—
Grotta Regina, Palermo	55 x 20	*c.* 750	ENE
Monte Adranone, Sambuca			
Temple at the High Place	10 x 31	310	NNE-SSW
Temple on Terrace II	8 x 21	168	SE-NW
Mozia (Cappiddazzu)	27.4 x 35.4	970	NW-SE
Solunto: tri-pillar altar			
Room	5 x 5	25	WNW-ESE
Altar	3.40 x 3.00	10.20	
ITALY: SARDINIA			
Antas	[18 x 9]	[162]	[NW-SE]
Bithia, Tempio di Bes	18 x 12	216	WSW-ENE or W-E
Cagliari, Capo Sant'Elia	—	—	—
Cagliari,Via Malta: overall	[120 x 43]	[5160]	NNE-SSW
Platform	15.75 x 10.75	169.3	

Table 4.2 (*Cont.*) Measurements and orientation of each site.

SITES	Length x Width (in metres)	Floor Space (in metres²)	Orientation
Matzanni	—	—	—
Monte Sirai, Mastio			
Rooms 7 and 8	2.45 x 1.65	4.04	NW-SE
Hall 6	6.5 x 3.4	22.1	
Nora, High Place of Tanit	11 x 10	110	?
Nora, *Ma'abed*	1.60 x 2.10	3.36	NNE-SSW
Olbia, Grotta del Papa	100 x 50	1500	SE
Sant'Antioco, High Place	—	—	—
Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao: chapel	6 x 3	9	NW-SE
Adjacent room (internal)	2 x 2	4	NW-SE
Tharros, Capo San Marco	7.5 x 12.65	94.5	NE-SW
Tharros, Temple K	5.13 x 3.38	17.3	W-E
Inner room only: interior	2.5 x 2.5	6.25	
Inner room only: exterior	3.38 x 3.38	11.42	
Tharros, Doric ½-columns	8.0 x 4.6	36.8	NW-SE
Tharros, Semitic plan	15 x 15	225	NW-SE
Tharros, Cornice blocks	—	—	—
Tharros, Temple of Demeter	?	?	WNW-ESE ?
SPAIN: MAINLAND			
Gorham's Cave, Gibraltar	30 x 8	*c.* 240	ESE
SPAIN: BALEARICS			
Cueva de Es Cuieram, Ibiza	40 x 40	*c.* 400	S
Illa Plana, Ibiza	—	—	—
TUNISIA			
Carton Chapel, Carthage	4.80 x 4.04	19.39	NE-SW
Sidi-bou-Saïd, Carthage	4.45 x 2.35	10.46	—
Kerkouane, Cap Bon			
cour I (including rooms)	10 x 4	400	NW-SE
cour II	4 x 3.5	14	
Ras ed-Drek, Cap Bon	7.85 x 11.30	88.7	SSW-NNE

KEY ? uncertain
[ ] reconstructed
Orientation is given along the axis from the interior of the building outwards.

Table 4.3 Fauna recovered, and zoomorphic representations.

SITES	Faunal remains	Zoomorphic representations
SYRIA		
***Ma'abed*, Amrith**		goat, bird, fruit, lion cub
Tell Sukas		
Period G[3]	ox, sheep, pig, fish, sea shells	
Period G[2]	ox, sheep, pig, goat, ass, bird, stag, sea shells	
Period G[1]	ox, sheep, stag, tortoise, sea shells, cockerel, ass, pig	
Period F	ox, sheep, tortoise, pig	
Mina Sukas	sea shells	hen or cockerel
LEBANON		
Bostan esh-Sheikh (Eshmun)		
Achaemenid phase		buck, tortoise, bird
Kharayeb: Hellenistic phase	lamb	duck, bull, pigeon, cockerel, goose, dogs, grapes, fruit
CYPRUS		
Kition: Bamboula		
E. Gjerstad		buck, bird
M. Yon	bones	horse
Kition: Kathari (Area II)		
Floor 3	sheep	sheep, lamb (inscription)
Floor 2a	sheep	
Floor 2	sheep	kid or gazelle
Meniko-Litharkes		lamb, ram, bull
GREECE		
Kommos, Crete	goat, sheep, sea shells, oysters	bull, horse
MALTESE ISLANDS		
Tas-Silg, Malta		
Midden, Area B	goat, sheep, limpets, oysters, sea urchins, coral, fish, birds	
ITALY: SARDINIA		
Antas	bone	
Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao	pig	pig, dove
SPAIN: MAINLAND		
Gorham's Cave, Gibraltar	bones, sea shells	
SPAIN: BALEARICS		
Cueva de Es Cuieram, Ibiza	bones, goat	
TUNISIA		
Carton Chapel		duck
Kerkouane: overall	bones	

Table 4.4 Deities and cult objects identified at the sites.

SITES	Inscriptions	Iconography	Cult object
SYRIA			
Amrith: Aïn el-Hayât			empty space ?
Amrith: *Ma'abed*	Eshmun	Melqart, Eshmun ?	empty space ?
Mina Sukas		Melqart-Heracles	baetyl ?
LEBANON			
Bostan esh-Sheikh (Eshmun)			
Podium: Achaemenid phase	Eshmun, Astarte		
Astarte Chapel: Hellenistic ph.			sphinx throne
Kharayeb			
Persian phase		Bes	
Hellenistic phase		Aphrodite, Artemis, Demeter and Kore, Hermes, Heracles, Zeus	
Oumm el-'Amed:			
Milk'ashtart	Milk'ashtart		
Oumm el-'Amed: Eastern			
Throne Chapel (Room 11)			sphinx throne
Sarepta	Tanit-Astarte		
Wasta	Aphrodite		
CYPRUS			
Kition: Bamboula			
The Swedish Mission		Melqart-Heracles	
The French Mission		Hathor ?	
Kition: Kathari (Area II)			
Temple 1: floor 3	Astarte		
Temple 1: floor 2a			
Temple 1: floor 2	Melqart		
Temple 4: floor			
Meniko-Litharkes			
Room A (inner recess)		Baal Hammon ?	
Room C			horns of consecration
GREECE			
Kommos, Crete			tri-baetyled shrine
MALTESE ISLANDS			
Tas-Silg, Malta		Astarte/Hera/Juno, Tanit ?	
ITALY: MAINLAND			
Pyrgi		Astarte/Uni	
ITALY: SICILY			
Grotta Regina, Palermo		Shadrapha, Isis ?	

Table 4.4 (*Cont.*) Deities and cult objects identified at the sites.

SITES	Inscriptions	Iconography	Cult object
ITALY: SARDINIA			
Antas	Sid		
Bithia (Tempio di Bes)		Bes	statue
Cagliari (Capo Sant'Elia)	Astarte		
Monte Sirai (Mastio)	"our lord ..."	Demeter ?	female statuette
Nora (*Ma'abed*)			empty space ?
Strumpu Bagoi, Narcao		Demeter	
Tharros (Capo San Marco)			baetyl ?
SPAIN: BALEARICS			
Cueva de Es Cuieram, Ibiza	Tanit	Tanit/Demeter/Isis	
TUNISIA			
Carton Chapel		Demeter ?	
Sidi-bou-Saïd, Carthage		Demeter	

PART III

4.6 Along the seaways of the Mediterranean.[153]

'A favouring wind sufficiently strong quickly carried them out of sight of land [...] Through the following night the same fog held; and when the sun was up, it was dispersed and the wind increased in force. Already they were in sight of land. Not very long afterwards the pilot told Scipio that Africa was not more than five miles away; they they sighted the Promontory of Mercury; if he should order him to steer for that, the entire fleet would soon be in port. Scipio, now that the land was visible, after a prayer to the gods that his sight of Africa might be a blessing to the state and to himself, gave orders to make sail [...]'

– LIVY XXIX, 27, 7-10

'One of the most exciting moments in navigation is making a landfall on an unfamiliar coast.'

– E. HUTCHINS (1995: 13)

'The survival in the modern mind of the same avenues of thought that were open to the ancient supplies part of the mental apparatus by which we can make sense of the past. We can rethink ancient logic. But it creates an interesting pitfall, in that it is hard to know when to stop.'

– B. KEMP (1991: 4)

4.6.1 Introduction.

It was pointed out earlier that three of the sites discussed (Grotta Regina – Sicily, Grotta del Papa – Sardinia, Gorham's Cave – Gibraltar) are situated in caves at coastal locations and that one (Ras ed-Drek – Tunisia) is built on the tip of a headland. Only Grotta Regina presented sufficient evidence to consider the cave as a religious site. Here, I want to develop an argument to defend the religious nature of these sites when they are considered together, following in greater detail the lead put forward by others for Ras ed-Drek (**3.11.4**) and Grotta del Papa (**3.8.9**) which was based on a study of coastal toponyms, references in the classical sources, and the recognition that some of these sites have their topographic location as a common feature (Fantar 1984: 11-12; Amucano 1992). Unfortunately, the ideas expressed about these two sites have

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[153] The ideas expressed in this section have been presented in seminars and conferences in Bristol (Post-Graduate Seminar series), London (The Accordia Research Centre, UCL: Ritual in Antiquity series), Liverpool (TAG 1996) and Manchester (The Sea in Antiquity series). I am grateful to members

been loosely formulated, are based on secondary sources, and fail to explain *clearly why* the location of these particular sites should afford them their sanctity. The remainder of this section will address this last issue. I will suggest that, in antiquity, conceiving of prominent points along the coast as religious or sacred was a process connected with spatial cognition of the maritime landscape and with the practical logic of navigation at sea.

4.6.2 Templed promontories and sacred headlands in the Mediterranean.

Marco Amucano's work on Grotta del Papa in Sardinia stands out because the author tries to make sense of the small grotto by concerning himself with the local setting, the identification of the island of Tavolara with Ptolemy's 'island of Hermes' (*Hermaea insula*) (1992: 542-544). Amucano's insights regarding the sanctification of promontories to certain divinities and the interplay between headland, metereology and cult practice are owed to Giuliana Massaro (1991: 177-181, n. 59), whose ideas and inspirations can in turn be traced back to a seminal article by Ellen Churchill Semple (1927) on templed promontories of the ancient Mediterranean. Semple's study had shown that the Classical writings preserve a record of one hundred and seventy-five promontory shrines, besides about twenty consecrated headlands, known to the ancients as sacred, but lacking any surviving record of altar or temple. These varied from wave-wrought caves which provided shelter for altar or wooden image of the deity and where the walls were inscribed with grateful prayers, to big temples better known through the example dedicated to Poseidon on Cape Sunium in Attica. Semple saw these temples perched on promontories as the first points of the homeland to greet the sailor: 'hence at one of the harbours which usually flanked the ends of the headlands, he beached his ship if the sea was calm and climbed to the summit sanctuary to offer his thanks for a safe journey.' (Semple 1927: 362) Semple also noted that the promontory sanctuaries reveal two geographic principles in their distribution. First, they appear singly or in groups over headlands which run out like

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of the audience for the interest shown, especially to Toby Parker, Emmanuele Curti, Ruth Whitehouse, Nicholas Purcell and Alec Tilley.

piers either side of a port entrance protecting the harbour from prevailing winds. This is the area where a ship could find difficulties to overcome strong air currents generated overland. Second, 'along the steep coasts of the Mediterranean falling winds or squalls from highland interiors added to the complexity of the wind systems and increased the difficulty of reaching port, especially on southward-facing slopes' thus explaining the headland temples that line routes popular to coastal navigation along most of the Aegean (Semple 1927: 370-377). These headlands, therefore, notorious as 'points of conflicting gales and raging surf', were dreaded by the ancient mariner on the one hand, but were useful on the other as their high relief made them conspicuous, turning them into 'road signs' (Semple 1927: 375)

All the Punic sites under consideration here could fall into the categories presented by Semple. Indeed, in his study of Phoenician coastal temples and shrines, Aaron Brody (1996: chapter 2) accepts the conclusions of the excavators of the sites at Capo San Marco at Tharros (**3.8.12**) and Ras ed-Drek in Tunisia at face value, and following Semple's work he classifies them as promontory temples.[154]

Semple's ideas remain a useful starting point for our discussion, despite the fact that she mainly concentrates on the Graeco-Roman world. Sufficient textual evidence is, moreover, available to show that the practice of consecrating headlands to deities existed in the Phoenician homeland and in the West too. The Assyrian annals for 839 BC recall the setting up of a stela in 841 by Salmanasar III at the mountains of *Ba'li-ra'si* 'at the side of the sea' while on a mission to receive tribute from the Phoenician cities and from King Jehu of Israel (*ANET*: 280). Although the location of this site is a matter of controversy,[155] on the translation of *Ba'li-ra'si* there is no doubt: it means "Baal/Lord of the Promontory" (Baal Rosh) (Lipinski 1995a: 274-276). Baal Rosh also appears on a stele from the Punic *tophet* at Sousse (Hadrumentum) in Tunisia (Cintas 1947: 39-40, fig. 65). Mh. Fantar has studied these references to Baal Rosh and concluded that this could be a Phoenician marine god to whom temples on

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154 However, Brody seems to be unaware of Gorham's Cave, Grotta Regina and Grotta del Papa.

155 See Elayi 1981 *contra* Lipinski 1971. The sanctuary is generally placed on the headland of Ras en-Naqura opposite Tyre, the 'sacred cape' (*ra'ši-qodšu*, literally the "Holy Head") of Egyptian

headlands were dedicated (1977: 120-126). Brody (1996: 32-34) suggests that the 'lord of the promontory was a protector of those who sailed within sight of his headland' near Tyre. Likewise, in considering the structure he uncovered at Ras ed-Drek, Mh. Fantar linked the remains with the semitic toponym of the area, Ras Addar. This name is usually related to the mountainous promontory in Tunisia, known as Cap Bon, the *hermaea akra* of the Greeks. Now, as Fantar pointed out (1984: 11-12 n. 3), a deity exists in the Phoenician and Punic pantheon with the name Baal Addir (*B'l 'dr*).[156] The accepted translation of the name is the 'powerful Baal' from the semitic root *'dr* (Fevrier 1949, Fantar 1969: 52-53). Fantar therefore argued that the toponym Ras Addar ('powerful cape') could be of Phoenician and Punic origin and that the cape could, at one time, have been consecrated to the deity Baal Addir.[157] Another pertinent episode is found in a passage of Hanno's *Periplus* where the Carthaginian admiral, on passing the Pillars of Hercules going southward, builds an altar to Poseidon on Cap Soleis (*GGM* I: 3).

These observations pose a dilemma, already touched on earlier (CHAPTER II), of trying to identify sites as religious mainly on the basis of textual sources when the archaeological evidence is either non-existant or otherwise assumed to be of a sort not likely to leave traces on the ground. This is how Fantar tries to explain away the dearth of archaeological evidence from Ras ed-Drek, noting that with reference to the altar of Poseidon on Cap Soleis, it would be useless for archaeologists to look for the remains because places of worship in the Semitic tradition were very simple affairs (1977: 35). Such arguments do not explain *why* Ras ed-Drek could be the site of a religious building; they simply involve taking the minimal stand characteristic of Phoenician scholars a hundred years ago, thereby robbing the evidence we have of its full potential. Here I want to follow an alternative approach, one that looks beyond the cave or the building remains, to concentrate instead on the natural landforms of which the sites form part. I shall argue that the relationship between the sites and the coastal

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topographic lists going back to the reign of Thutmoses III (1479-1425 BC; *DAE* dates) (Ahituv 1984: 162-163).

156 It is known from a fifth-century BC inscription from Byblos (*KAI* 4) and there are numerous references to it in Punic and Latin inscriptions from North Africa at least starting from the end of the third century BC (Lipinski 1995a: 88-90).

locales is more complex than a glance at a two-dimensional map might imply. My contention is that we can understand these sites better if we investigate the wider maritime landscape.

4.6.3 The significance of headlands.

I would like to begin by repeating observations already made: all the sites are located near the sea, they command extensive views of it, and they form part of conspicuous headlands or coastal landforms.[158] Grotta del Papa and Gorham's Cave can only be reached by boat,[159] and have no view other than of the sea, as with Grotta Regina high up in Capo Gallo. Their location along the shoreline immediately suggests that the sites were associated with a maritime exploitation, with mariners and sailors, with people approaching the land from the sea. This to me suggests a different perception of the landscape to that which a modern observer is accustomed to when the sites are studied from a conventional topographic map, or even when they are approached by car or on foot from the land. Seen from the sea, the sites constitute only a small part of much larger land masses which dominate the landscape for considerable distances (**Table 4.5**); the headlands are more visually impressive than the caves themselves. This was my reaction when I first visited Ras ed-Drek on the tip of Cap Bon, walking up a winding path from a sandy beach: the remains seen from the nearby Punic fort were disappointing, perched dangerously on a rocky point extending out to sea. When viewed from Kelibia, 25 km. down the coast, however, the remains at Ras ed-Drek disappeared into the enormous bulk of land which is Cap Bon (*cf.* **FIGURES 122** and **126**). Back in England, at the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty at Taunton, I tried to overcome the limitations of a landscape archaeology based on traditional surveys made on foot, by browsing through countless sketches and drawings of this and other headlands, prepared by naval apprentices *at sea*. All

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[157] Also Lipinski 1993: 183. Sznycer (1977: 173) notes the existence of the toponymn *rš 'dr* (*Grand Cap*) on legends of Punic coins. The name is associated with the Spanish city of *Melilla* in Morocco.

[158] Ras ed-Drek = Cap Bon, Tunisia (**FIGURE 126**); Grotta Regina = Capo Gallo, Sicily (**FIGURE 61**); Grotta del Papa = Isola Tavolara, Sardinia (**FIGURE 98**); Gorham's Cave = Rock of Gibraltar (**FIGURE 111**).

[159] This appears to have been the case in antiquity.

the landmasses of which my sites formed part were there. The question I asked myself was: why *these* headlands and not others?

	Height above sea level (in metres)	*Theoretical visibility (in nautical miles)*[160]
Cap Bon, Tunisia	388	38
Capo Gallo, Sicily	575	46
Isola Tavolara, Sardinia	565	46
Gibraltar, Spain	425	40

Table 4.5 Height and theoretical visibility of headlands.

By following this line of argument, by "experiencing" places and locales, some will contend that there is a danger of projecting onto the past our own thoughts and perceptions of what should, or should not, be significant in the landscape. While I am aware that to assess ancient perceptions of the landscape is not an easy task (*cf.* Buxton 1994: chapter 6), in the context of the present discussion, I think that analogies from recent historical periods are valid to help us understand how people perceived of their surroundings. There are three points that I would like to stress. First, the shape of the land, the *outline* of a prominent headland, would have remained the same over the last two thousand years, and land subsidence or a rise in sea level would not have altered this in any significant way. Second, it is my contention, discussed in detail shortly, that headlands serve the same primary purpose to mariners now as they did in antiquity. Third, the visual experience which humans at sea undergo when they are approaching land has not altered since antiquity:[161] as Pietro Janni (1984) has emphatically argued, the language used by Classical geographers in their histories or *periploi* betrays a conception of space which is not cartographic but perceptual and itinerant, of places experienced by a human subject along a route. This

[160] For method of calculation see Schüle (1970); 1 nautical mile = 1.85 km.

[161] This is the unanimous view of all the yachtsmen with whom I have had the pleasure to sail and/or discuss this aspect of my research: Antony de Bono, Michael Gillingham, Peter Hemmingway, Alec Tilley. See the comments by Ulzega (1993-1994); also C. Tilley (1994: 74).

is also reflected in the meaning of the Greek word *periploi* (περιπλοι), or 'voyages around': following the coastline, islands or coastal cities are 'beyond' or 'opposite' headlands, to 'their left' or to 'their right', on 'this side' and 'that side' (see below).[162]

It is commonplace amongst sailors that headlands are important for seafaring and navigation: headlands are fixed points, seamarks, for which a navigator steers (McGrail 1983: 314, 1991: 86). A quick glance at a modern pilot book will show this: the coast of each country is traced by its headlands, by their coordinates and geological characteristics. For the Royal Navy, sketching headlands and landfalls was considered to be a crucial part of the education of a young naval officer and the drawings were expected to be included into a ship's log for future reference (Methven 1854: 44; Sands 1990: 192). Accounts of exploration in the Arctic regions as recorded in the journal of the Royal Geographic Society in the latter part of last century, also convey a vivid idea of how important it was to discover bold and lofty headlands when surveying new coastlines: their positions were fixed and marked out by erecting a high stone cairn; they were also named, sketched and photographed.[163] In antiquity, geographers and historians, like Strabo, Polybius, Pliny and Livy, used the distances between headlands (in days of sailing or walking or in stadia) to form the framework for a geographical description of a particular area.[164]

Landfall sketches were, and still are, accompanied by sailing directions gathered in pilot books. The information contained in these pilot books has remained largely unchanged since antiquity. This is apparent from the following juxtaposition

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162 I am grateful to Emmanuele Curti for insisting that I should read Pietro Janni's work. Interesting observations are apparently to be found in: Christian Jacob, Logiques du paysage dans les textes géographiques grecs. Quelques propositions méthodologiques, in *Lire le Paysage*, pp. 159 ff. Presses de l'université de Saint-Étienne, 1984. This book, which was unavailable to me for consultation, is mentioned in Corbin (1994: 293 n. 74).

163 As examples see the accounts of the Jackson-Harmsworth Polar Expedition (Montefiore Brice 1896) and of the expedition to Melville Bay (Astrup 1895).

164 Take for example, the description of Sicily given by Pliny in his *Natural History*: 'Sicily itself is triangular in shape, its points being the promontory [...] named Pelorum pointing towards Italy, opposite Scylla, Pachynum towards Greece, the Morea being 440 miles away, and Lilybaeum towards Africa, at a distance of 180 from the Promontory of Mercury and 190 from Cape Carbonara in Sardinia. The following are the distances of these promontories from one another and the length of the coast lines [...]' (Pliny III, 8, 87)

of descriptions of the same tract of coast (e.g. Cap Bon, Tunisia) supplied in books of sailing directions pertaining to different dates (**FIGURE 126**):

'After Neapolis the Hermaean cape and city. From Neapolis to Hermaea is a sail of a day and a half. But from Neapolis on foot across the isthmus to the other sea, by Carthage is 180 stadia. For the promontory is one separated by an isthmus [...]

'After the isthmus is Carthage, a city of the Phoenicians and a harbour. Sailing along from the Hermaea it is half a day to Carthage. There are islands off the Hermaean cape, Pontia island and Cosyrus. From Hermea to Cosyrus is a day's sail. Beyond the Hermaean cape, towards the rising sun, are three small islands belonging to this shore, inhabited by Carthaginians: the city and harbour of Melite, the city of Gaulus, and Lampas; this has two or three towers. But from Cosyrus to the Lilybaean promontory in Sicily is one day's sail [...]'

(Periplus of Scylax: 110, 111 in Nordenskiöld nd.: 7)

'A miglia venti vi è Cap Bono e fa costa alta, e sopra fa riparo per sirocco e lebici, e sopra detto Capo della punta di ponente vi è una Torre larga e tonda, ch è guarda da detto Capo.'

(*Portolano 1740*: 118-119)[165]

'Cap Bon (ancient Hermaeum prom.), which projects in a northerly direction about 7½ miles eastward of Ras el-Amar, is a high, bold dark headland forming the eastern extreme of the gulf of Tunis. About a mile within the cape the land rises to an elevation of 1,290 feet above the sea, and is surmounted by the ruins of an old tower, whence the land forms a declivity to the southward. This lofty promontory, from its geographic position, is an important landmark to vessels navigating the channel between Sicily and the Tunisian coast, the great highway between the ports of western Europe and the eastern division of the Mediterranean. In clear weather Cap Bon may be seen from a distance of 15 or 16 leagues and when first viewed appears like an island [...]'

(Mediterranean Pilot 1873: 269)

'Cap Bon (37° 05' N, 11° 03' E), see views 45 and 46, is the NE extremity of Tunisia, and of the mountainous promontory separating the Gulf of Tunis from the Gulf of Hammamet (chart 3327).

A shoal with a depth of 2 m over it, lies close off the cape [...]

Cap Bon Light is exhibited from a white tower 20 m in height, with a red top and surmounting a dwelling, standing 5 cables SE of Cap Bon.

A radiobeacon transmits from a position 5½ cables S of the lighthouse.

A signal station stands on the summit of the hill dominating the cape, and two conspicuous radio masts, painted red and white, are situated about 1 cable W of the signal station.

Traffic separation. Lanes for traffic separation have been established N of Cap Bon, as indicated on the chart [...]'

(Mediterranean Pilot 1978: 164)

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[165] I am grateful to Frank Theuma for introducing me to the collection of *portolani* of the Order of the Knights of St John kept at the National Library of Malta.

All four passages attempt to provide an accurate description of the stretch of coast in North Africa around Cap Bon. The late fourth-century BC account of Scylax gives the impression that the Hermaean cape is the point where various maritime routes meet: towards Carthage, the small islands and Sicily (Lipinski 1993: 184). And that same impression is given in the first edition of the Mediterranean Pilot book, compiled for the British Admiralty by William Smyth in 1873; by that time, however, the tower mentioned in the *portolano* of the Knights of St John had fallen into ruins. In the latest edition of the Mediterranean Pilot (1978) the lengthy description of the outline of the headland is replaced by Western conventions (longitude/latitude, light and radio signals) intended to allow navigators to fix their precise position with the help of instruments and a series of mathematical calculations. Yet, the reader is still told to consult not only the chart but the landfall views provided in the book. In other words, the mariner is told to consult perceptual images of the coast recorded by others who had already been there before. For a navigator, therefore, *to arrive or return to a stretch of coast involves arriving or returning to the image of that stretch of coast.* That image can be stored on paper as a two-dimensional drawing or photo, or in the mind. This is, in a nutshell, the principle behind practical way-finding as discussed by Alfred Gell (1985). Gell argues that the function of a map is to generate images, and that the navigational utility of images arises because they are referable to coordinates on a map. Landfall sketches in pilot books are useless for navigational purposes if they are not accompanied by the coordinates (usually a bearing and a distance) of the point from which the view is "true". In other words, the landfall sketch will not get you to the particular landfall; it only tells you that you are there if you are there already. Navigational success – like going from A to C via B – can only be attained if the decisions to be formulated are based on a correct identification of the position of a navigator – being at B and not at D. According to Gell (1985: 282) this logical process also takes places in subliminal or subconscious way-finding which 'consists of a two-way process of generating images from a mental map and matching these images with perceptual input'. If the perceptual input is visual then the image (in this case, the perspective view of the landscape) has to be *unique* or *exceptional* in order to be identified with specific coordinates in the mental map and ensure navigational success (see Hutchins 1995: 134-135). Of course, *many* headlands line a coastline, but here I

am suggesting that certain headlands, like the ones discussed in the present work, are so *distinctive* that they produce *unique* perceptual images, and today, as in antiquity, they constitute important reference points in a navigator's mental map. In a world of push-button technology and Global Positioning navigation systems, this 'quality of vivid concreteness, of unmistakable form' to aid orientation is often missed (Lynch 1973: 304).[166]

An extract from a ship's journal prepared by Robert Methven last century for a voyage along the East coast of Sardinia provides an interesting insight into the idea of cognitive processes just described: 'The careful navigation for the straits of Bonifacio may be considered to commence at Tavolara; which is 20' from Biscie - In fine weather the approach to Bonifacio is plain sailing - *Tavolara makes abruptly like Gibraltar or Aden* and being careful for the rocky islets to the south it may be approached and looked for boldly [...]' (Methven 1854: 9 of journal; emphasis added). The fact that Methven compares Tavolara with Aden and Gibraltar is remarkable: his observation shows that the exceptional topographic characteristics of Tavolara – 'a flat tabled mountain [...] with broad sweeps and shelving precipices as to constitute grand features' (Smyth 1828: 236) – produce perceptual images of Aden and Gibraltar that single them out for comparison. The unique perceptual image of Tavolara allows for navigational decisions to be taken (**FIGURE 98**): it marks the entrance to an important harbour (Olbia) and more importantly it signifies the shortest crossing to peninsular Italy from Sardinia (see Mastino 1991: 209-213; Zucca 1991: 247); in the navigator's mental map it is an important reference point.

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[166] It has to be said, however, that no matter how much electronic gadgetry is on board a yacht, no skipper will dare approach land without checking charts and *scanning the horizon*. This becomes very apparent in a study by psychologist Edwin Hutchins (1995) concerning cognition at sea, where he investigates the implications of answering the question 'Where am I?',which he argues is central to all sorts of navigation (1995: 12). He shows that even on a modern naval vessel, the process of reconciling features in the coastal landscape and their representation on a chart, does takes place and is an essential part of pilotage when sailing coastal waters. Indeed, operators are positioned on platforms to starboard and port from where they 'scan city skylines for major landmarks' through alidades mounted on pedestals, when the ship is about to enter port (1985: 43-48). The position fixes made are relayed to the operators in the pilothouse, where they are written down in a bearing log, transferred to the hoey (a one-armed protractor), and finally to the chart (1985: 117-128, fig. 3.2).

Likewise are Cap Bon, discussed above, and Capo Gallo guarding the entrance to the Gulf of Palermo for boats approaching from the direction of Sardinia (*Portolano* nd: 217; Smyth 1824: Appendix I, iv; Mastino 1991: 218). Indeed, the importance of Cap Bon as a clearly identifiable reference point is highly apparent when one considers that the southern Mediterranean coast is all low-lying, with lee shores and quicksands, offering bad conditions for navigation. This was a well-known fact in antiquity and in more recent times (Smyth 1854: 88; Pryor 1995: 213). Indeed, it is not surprising that the high, white-marble tower at Pharos near Alexandria was built, '[...] for since the coast was harbourless and low on either side, and had reefs and shallows, those who were sailing from the open sea thither needed some lofty and conspicuous sign to enable them to direct their course aright to the entrance of the harbour' (Strabo XVII, 1, 6) (Naish 1985: 16-17).

The unique formation of the coastal landscape at the Straits of Gibraltar has been debated since antiquity (**FIGURE 111**). The Greek geographer Strabo tells us how much confusion was caused in ancient times in looking for a set of pillars set up as landmarks by Heracles at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea, or to associate them with the two pillars said to have been erected on either side of the entrance to the temple of Melqart at Gades (see Smith 1869: 1032-1033; Gagé 1951; Bonnet 1988: 233-236). Despite different readings of the textual sources (e.g. Turnquist 1974), I find Strabo's conclusions more telling: '[...] it would not be foolish to liken to pillars the mountains that are situated at the strait, since they present such a prominent appearance as do columns or pillars'; for Strabo, 'the fame of the name "Pillars of Heracles" prevailed because the name originated, *not with merchants, but rather with commanders*' (Strabo III, 5, 6; emphasis added).

It is within this "functionalist" framework that I seek to justify the existence of sacred space at Cap Bon (Ras ed-Drek), Capo Gallo (Grotta Regina), Gibraltar (Gorham's Cave) and the island of Tavolara (Grotta del Papa). Experiencing the maritime landscape through the movement of the human body has allowed me to understand why certain headlands are of significant importance to people travelling by sea. This way of looking at the landscape latches on to what Mary Helms has to say:

'[...] a landscape has no meaningful shape and significance until it is accorded place and identity in the social and cognitive world of human experience' (1988: 20). The foregoing framework has investigated the cognitive dimension of experience. There remains the social dimension to discuss; as Buxton (1994: 81) puts it, of asking oneself 'what people perceived themselves to be doing'. If, as has been argued, headlands constitute a fundamental reference system for sailors and mariners, then we expect the maritime landscape to have been 'socialized', to have been replete with cultural meaning and symbolism to the people who experienced it (Tilley 1994; Tacon 1994; Appleton 1975: chapter 4). Perceiving a headland was more than simply a matter of calling up the image of that headland. Headlands were not merely 'viewed': for the sailor they symbolised home or the correct way home; in acute weather conditions, headlands impeded movement and became boundaries to be overcome. A prospect could quickly turn into a hazard if the wind suddenly changed direction: rising seas instilled fear and anxiety in those on board, caused seasickness, dizziness, and nausea. Cloud, rain, or fog could also obscure headlands, causing sailors to loose orientation, adding to the risk of being driven onto shoals, banks, or on unknown and foreign shores. The reminder of Alain Corbin (1995: chapter 1) that the classical period knew nothing of the attraction of the seaside as we think of it today, is apt in this context. Through the rituals carried out on board the ship (Kapitän 1985), the wildness of the sea and the headlands were acknowledged and controlled.

The dangers which lay along the routes near the headlands being discussed here are notorious to this day.[167] The Straits of Gibraltar are afflicted by the wind known as the Levanter, which when fresh or strong, creates violent eddies in the lee of the Rock. The Mediterranean Pilot (1978: 17) cautions that 'these eddies, with their up and down, and cross currents, are troublesome and dangerous to sailing craft', and the wind frequently blows strongly from opposite directions at places only about 50 m. apart. Ships leaving the Straits not only had to overcome the current but also the

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[167] As Pryor (1995: 208) points out, 'The historical record provides no evidence whatsoever to suggest that in any period during the past 2500 years climatic variation causes changes in weather patterns which would invalidate any conclusions drawn from modern observations about the influence of metereological conditions on navigation.' In fact, a study conducted by Murray (1987) has shown that the wind conditions of the Mediterranean in the late fourth century BC coincided with modern

winds bouncing off the Rock. An eighteenth-century *portolano* notes that such winds were dangerous for the damage they could inflict on a ship's masts (*Portolano* nd: 34v).

The adverse currents, rough seas and strong winds that generate around Ras ed-Drek are given away in the name of the headland, which as Serge Lancel (1995a: 265) points out, means 'Cape Terror', while 'Cap Bon' is nothing but a euphemism. About 50 miles north of Cap Bon was Skerki bank with its shallow reefs which posed dangers for ships which tried to make a landfall in North Africa without being driven to the Gulf of Gabes with its dangerous sandbanks by the strong SE current and the northerly winds that prevail in the Sicilian Channel (Pryor 1995: 215-216; Smyth 1854: 164-165).[168]

Approaching Palermo from the NW or W, from Sardinia or the E coast of Sicily, dangers would have been posed by the 'violent and squally gusts of wind that gather between Mount Pellegrino and Capo di Gallo' (**FIGURE 61**); Smyth recommended 'standing along the west side of the bay during a fresh breeze, to station hands by the sheets and halyards, and be ready to keep large' (1824: iv).

It is the dangers and the ambiguities posed by these all-important coastal reference points that, I suggest, animated the headlands with the sacred. The argument can be taken further: if the process of naming of places really imbues the landscape with special qualities that serve to create meaning in it (Tilley 1994: 18-19; Westerdahl 1992: 9), then it is worth recalling that two of the headlands studied here were known to the Greek and Roman historians and geographers with the name of their respective god of travellers, Hermes and Mercury.[169] In Greek mythology, Hermes is the god who guides, especially travellers, 'for whom he marks out the route in the form of a pillar or herm' (Jost 1996: 690). In the context of the present discussion the striking relationship between the names of the headlands, their

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metereological data; thus, 'we are fully justified in applying modern wind data to the problems of classical antiquity' (Murray 1995: 33).

[168] I owe this reference to Reuben Grima.

appearance (enormous "pillars") and their function (seamarks) cannot simply be rejected as fortuitous.[170] In her investigation of the ritual of travel, Mary Helms (1988: 111-114) pointed out that in Greek mythology Hermes was responsible for dealing with cosmic "forces" which must be controlled and put to use for human beings. Gods are perceived as active: they bring about storms, floods, war; but they are also active in preventing these events so long as due recognition of their existence is made to them. It is tempting to suggest, as Amucano (1992) has done for Isola Tavolara, that these unique and dangerous headlands formed part of a landscape of mythological narrative in which Hermes set up "pillars" to mark the crossroads of the Mediterranean sea: indeed, although this narrative is today lost, the suggestion has much to commend it because if all the seven headlands named after Hermes are plotted on a map of the Mediterranean, they are seen to fall exactly in those places where you would expect sea crossings between landmasses to take place (**FIGURE 127**).[171] Only the myth associated with the Pillars of Heracles survives, and the Latin authors speak of how Heracles, the eponymous hero of all the great routes in the ancient world, separated what was originally one big mountain into two to form the pillars and mark the symbolic confines of the great sea (Pomponius Mela I, 27).

Amid all this talk of Greek and Roman perception of the landscape it is important not to forget that what kicked off our investigation were sites with Punic, *not* Greek or Roman, archaeological remains; it is to the Phoenicians and to *their*

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169 Pliny in his *Natural History* translates the *Hermaea akra* of North Africa into *Mercurii promunturium* (Pliny III, 87) and so does Livy (XXIX, 27, 8).

170 Indeed, it is hard to accept the argument of some (e.g. Osborne 1985) that the origins of the herm with the head and erect phallus on a quadrangular body should not be sought in that pile of stones sacred to Hermes (*Hermaios lophos*) which was an important border monument: 'the etymological warrant for the association is imaginary' (Osborne 1985). The subtle relationship between topographic features in the landscape and certain divinities is a recurring element in ancient Greek religion; see the papers in Alcock & Osborne (1994).

171 Ptolemy makes reference to a number of headlands named after the Greek god Hermes: one on the west coast of Sardinia (Capo Caccia: Smyth (1828: 275) or Capo Marrargiu: Meloni (1986)) and one on the east (III, 3, 2; Isola Tavolara); one on the Egyptian littoral (IV, 5, 7; Ras al-Kanais: Smyth 1826; Ball (1942: 136) gives 3 km. SSE of Ras el-Hikma); one on the south coast of Crete (III, 7, 3; Cape Littinos or Cape Tripiti ?; *cf.* Mediterranean Pilot 1892: 364, 368); and one in North Africa (IV, 3, 8; Cap Bon). Another one is mentioned beyond the Pillars of Heracles on the coast of Mauretania by Scylax (Scylax, 112). The *Stadiasmus* makes a reference to a headland of Hermes on the coast of Libya near Leptis Magna. For sea crossings between Crete and the coast of Egypt, see Lambrou-Phillipson (1991); also Pryor (1995: 216); for navigation along the coast of Libya and Tunisia, see Fulford (1989); for navigation in the western Mediterranean, see Aubet (1994: 163-169), Mastino (1991) and Zucca (1991).

perception of the maritime landscape that, in conclusion, we have to return. It has to be said straight away that we lack entirely evocative information of the type discussed above for the Greeks and the Romans; when we do, as with Hanno's *periplus*, the Greek overlay has hidden much of the evidence for unedited Phoenician information: the text of the *periplus* has been preserved in Greek not Punic so that we do not know how the Carthaginians referred to the Pillars of Heracles and how they called the sea-god Poseidon to whom the altar on the headland was built.[172] That the Phoenicians had, to borrow a phrase from Tilley (1994: chapter 3), 'an affinity with the coast', can be safely assumed, given the fact that the Phoenicians embarked on voyages that crossed the entire Mediterranean and beyond; moreover, a passing reference in Herodotus (III.136) should not be overlooked if we assume, like Sarah Morris (1992: 373), that Phoenicians from Sidon were dispatched with the reconnaissance mission sent by Darius to Greece to make 'a written record of the results of a careful study of most of the notable features of the coast'. If we follow the argument presented earlier that the cognitive processes which mariners undertake in way-finding are universal (Gell 1985), then we can conclude that the headlands would have served the same function for the Greeks and Romans as for the Phoenicians and Carthaginians. Indeed, it is worth noting too that the first treaty between Carthage and Rome of 509 BC, as narrated in Polybius (III, 1, 22), has the 'Beautiful Promontory' (*Kalon Akroterion*) as the boundary beyond which the Romans and their allies had to refrain from sailing.[173] To undertake an investigation into the Phoenician or Punic mythological narrative that would have given meaning to the landscapes the mariners perceived, is an undertaking for which the evidence is wanting. The Phoenician equivalent of the Greek Hermes is not known but Sergio Ribichini (1985: 95-112), who has studied the Classical *interpretatio* of semitic divinities, argues that the Phoenicians incorporated Hermes into their own pantheon. His evidence comes from a bilingual inscription from Arwad (*IGLS* VII, 4001), admittedly late (25/24 BC), which mentions Heracles and Hermes: whereas Heracles is translated into Phoenician as Melqart, the name Hermes is simply

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172 See Segert (1970) who defends the Phoenician background of Hanno's *periplus*.

173 The identification of the headland is a matter of debate. The majority of commentators identify it with Cape Farina (Ras el-Mekki) which extends eastwards in the Gulf of Tunis; others are in favour of Cap Bon. See Desanges (1990a, 1990b) and Lancel (1995a: 86-87); also Cataudella (1992, 1995).

transliterated phonetically using the Phoenician script.[174] Ribichini's conclusion finds corroboration in Shelby Brown's study of the caduceus symbol employed on funerary stelae from Punic tophets (1991: 131-134). Brown argues that the repeated occurrence of the herald's sign, a clear attribute of Hermes, would suggest that 'the Phoenicians certainly recognized the divinity and his attributes and must have been aware of his role as intermediary between humans and god and as a guide to the underworld' (1991: 134).[175] Although the origins of the Punic caduceus are now being sought outside the Greek world (Lipinski 1995b), there is still more evidence which suggests that the Greek divinity was known to the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians: at the site of Kharayeb in the Litani valley, terracotta statuettes showing Hermes carrying sheep and Hermes holding the caduceus (**PLATE 4b**), were being deposited by the visitors to the Phoenician sanctuary there.[176] And in Carthage, Hermes appears on the reverse of a hatchet-razor from a funerary context dating to the fourth century BC (C. Picard 1967: 62 No. 13, plate 18).

4.6.4 Concluding remarks

In this section an attempt was made to understand the nature of a number of sites which revealed traces of Punic material culture. I have argued that the importance of these sites lies in their position in the wider landscape: conspicuous headlands that line the Mediterranean sea and overlook its horizon. I have shown that the cognitive processes which modern-day sailors carry out when making a landfall are not dissimilar to those which ancient mariners carried out when navigating along a coast: exceptional headlands were, and still are, important reference points in a navigator's mental map. This detail has been stressed because practical way-finding has been taken for granted in an age when humans have substituted tools, such as electronic navigational aids, for direct knowledge of the physical environment. I went

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174 Unaware of this inscriptional datum, Lipinski (1995a: 393-396) suggests that the Greek Hermes must have had a Punic equivalent. He notes, however, that Hermes occurs on fourth-century BC coins from Sicily.

175 Also Bertrandy & Sznycer (1987).

176 Chébab 1951-1952: 91-94, 134; Hermes: Chébab 1951-1952: Kh. 114-116, 147-154. Hermes the shepherd: Chébab 1952-1952: Kh. 117-139, 141-146; Chébab 1953-1954: plates 25. 3-4, 26.

on to suggest that as their significance was appropriated by navigators, headlands would have been imbued with symbolic properties, and that religious ritual would have taken place at sea in order to acknowledge these properties. In one case (Grotta Regina) where the site was easily accessible from a nearby bay (Mondello), ritual took place inside the cave and votive dedications were written on the walls. It was also suggested that these headlands could be thought of as nodal points along seaways travelled by mythological beings, as is suggested by the dedication of some of these headlands to the Greek gods Hermes and Heracles. Although it remains uncertain whether Hermes was assimilated into the Semitic pantheon, the existence of a 'Lord of the promontory' allows us to suggest that the Phoenicians and Carthaginians could perceive of headlands as sacred to a divinity. I have suggested that the concern with survival at sea animated the headlands with the sacred.

CHAPTER V

Ritual and Society: Phoenician and Punic Religious Sites in Historical Context.

'Carthage also appears to have a good constitution, with many outstanding features as compared with those of other nations [...] Many regulations at Carthage are good; and a proof that its constitution is well regulated is that the populace willingly remain faithful to the constitutional system, and that neither strife has arisen in any degree worth mentioning, not yet a tyrant.'

– ARISTOTLE *The Politics* II, 8, 1

'The built environment clarifies social roles and relations.'

– TUAN (1977: 102)

'The organization of space is defined not only by the relationship of man to his natural environment, but also by the relations between different groups of human beings.'

– DE POLIGNAC (1995: 36)

5.0 Introduction.

This chapter looks at how Phoenician and Punic religious sites functioned within the society that created them. Here I am not interested in society at the level of the individual, and I am not interested in custom either, but rather in ritual practice which calls for the attention of a *wider* audience (Lewis 1980: 7). The argument is as follows: if religious ritual involves repeatable action from people following

established rules and conventions, then the contents of the ritual should prefigure the structure of that community or society. But *how* exactly does this happen? Archaeologists have *not* come up with any clear answers on this issue. Studying funerary remains has been the most successful endeavour in this field, simply because *patterns* can be easily detectable when confronted by lots of burials in a cemetery, and the "special" distinguished from the "commonplace". Versed in the language of social anthropologists, archaeologists argue that death is a rite of passage, that this involves a change in the status of the dead person, and that this change is "ritualized" through the treatment given by members of a community to the corpse, the placing of goods in the grave, and so on. Of course, this is simplifying a much more complex issue, but ultimately, cutting through the jargon, we see that explaining the pattern often assumes that we can recognise wealth and display when we encounter it in the archaeological record, and infer social rank from that. Some archaeologists have refrained from doing so (e.g. Ridgway 1992: 71) while others are more optimistic. Ian Morris's (1992) recent attempt to address the issue of death ritual and social structure in antiquity has been criticized exactly on this point, of introducing subjective judgements and *a priori* assumptions into the core of his investigation. In response, Morris repeats what he had already stated clearly that it is the job of the archaeologist to make claims about the significance of past situations: '[...] it is always we, from our vantage point in the present, who have to decide what we find important.' (1995: 332) It is saying that the terms in which the modern observer looks at the evidence are a *sine qua non* of any attempt to write history from archaeological evidence.

I am mentioning all this because much of it is relevant to a study of sanctuaries, where a reliance is often made on the (implicit) assumption that the relative size and value of votive offerings is an index of the social standing of the donor. There is every reason to believe that there is truth in this assumption; whether you decide to refer to the method of inference as 'cross-cultural logic' or a 'leap of faith' (Morris 1992: 29) is not important. It certainly makes a great deal of difference if a votive offering is a tiny amulet rather than a marble statue, and it makes a difference whether the offering is deposited in a small chapel rather than at a large temple. What we as archaeologists can hope to discern are these very differences in

the material record, when ritual action takes a form that renders it more *visible materially* for reasons undoubtedly related to social conventions that regulate the way religious experience is induced. And for this, complex criteria are unnecessary because the objects we perceive are commensurate with the size of our body. The task I set upon myself in this chapter is to highlight these differences when they can be discerned and provide an explanation for them. I will relate these differences to the spatial context where they occur in an attempt to understand why religious sites arose where they did. In CHAPTER IV, the location of sites was pursued in relation to landscape, here I will discuss it in relation to territory.

The account that follows is not long; it *cannot* be long simply because the data at our disposal are either of poor quality or inadequate. Suffice to say, for example, that the argument offered here revolves mainly, if not *only*, around dedications or offerings that have been preserved, and often removed from their primary context by the practice of clearing out dedications in bulk. The one-sided view obtained from such a study with all the attendant pitfalls and shortcomings has already been remarked for Classical Greece (Snodgrass 1989-1990). Floral and faunal material was hardly noticed in the excavations of the sites reviewed in CHAPTER III (**Table 4.3**), and when they were cursory references to 'ash and bones' are all we have to go by. And yet we know that offerings of food and drink were being made in some of these religious sites because they are represented alongside votaries, while the Marseille Tariffs give us a good insight into what was expected from priests and dedicants in third-century BC Carthage (Amadasi Guzzo 1988: 108-118; Xella 1997). Moreover, we lack the understanding to link deities worshipped in a sanctuary, when these are known (**Table 4.4**), with the prerogatives they enjoyed and their location in the landscape, unless they underwent a Classical *interpretatio* and we assume that their duties were assimilated by the Phoenicians and Carthaginians. The picture we have is therefore partial from the start. The critical assessment of the data carried out in the preceding chapters has, however, laid the ground for an outline. *Some* evidence is available and what is there begs an explanation. I intend giving the larger picture, to place Phoenician and Punic society in the context of Mediterranean history in the first millennium BC.

5.1 Ritual and Territory.

It seems right to begin where scholars of the Phoenician world have sought the importance of one type of religious space: that is, the construction of a sanctuary to the god Melqart of Tyre which consecrated the seizure of new territory outside Phoenicia serving as a place where commercial transactions could be undertaken. This is an interesting picture, one that is clearly indebted to a paradigm developed by François de Polignac (1995) for Classical Greece, where the construction of a monumental temple is considered the "birth certificate" of the *polis*. But are we justified in comparing the Greek colonial world with that of the Phoenician? And does this paradigm yield to the archaeological evidence? Perhaps it should be pointed out straight away that none of the sanctuaries of Melqart visited or mentioned by the classical authors have yet been located,[1] while the only site which appears to have been connected with business or industry dates to Hellenistic times (Oumm el-'Amed). Of course this does not mean that the sanctuaries to Melqart did *not* exist, and our lacunae reflect more the result of very limited excavations than anything else.[2] Still, I am reticent to use these textual glosses to infer much about early Phoenician society. Attempts to do so have implicitly assumed that a Greek model should work as well for the Phoenicians:[3] Maria Eugenia Aubet's account (1994: 137-143) on the role of religion in founding colonies is entirely dependent on a method of stitching together texts composed centuries after the events they describe to conclude that 'Tyrian custom demanded that a temple be built in honour of Melqart'.[4] I am not saying that this is a wrong approach, and I would not readily dissent from her views, but in her attempt to promote Tyrian initiative in Phoenician colonization, interesting archaeological evidence that corresponds to actual ritual experiences at particular stages in Phoenician and Punic history is overlooked.

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1 Sanctuaries to Melqart are mentioned in connection with Tyre, Thasos (Greece), Gades (Spain), Lixus (Morocco); see Bonnet 1988. For Gades, see Garcia Y Bellido (1964).

2 Proper excavations in Tyre have only been limited to a surface area of 150 square metres (Bikai 1978), while at Cádiz the monument would probably be under water, as is suggested by the recent discovery of bronze statutary (Perdigones Moreno 1991).

3 See Grottanelli 1981b; the paper by Acquaro (1988a) is of no use, despite the catchy title.

4 Aubet (1994: 139) speaks of the building of a temple to Melqart which 'symbolized the founding, refounding, rebuilding or reorganization of a Phoenician city', citing a reference in Isiah 23, 4. Nothing of the sort is mentioned in the biblical source. Elsewhere (1994: 240) she says that there were temples to Melqart at Nora and Malta. Neither of the two has yet been identified.

Before that evidence is considered, it is important to stress the differences between the early Phoenician settlements and the Greek colonies of southern Italy and Sicily. H. G. Niemeyer (1990) has already argued that to compare the Greek colonial situation with the Phoenician equivalent is misplaced, for the simple reason that the early Phoenician settlements lacked a *chora*, the outlying territory on which the city drew its resources. The important criterion to back this argument is not location: Phoenician settlements, like the Greek ones, have been found in the very places where one would expect them to be found, in strategic locations in the open sea, along the major indentations of a coast, and at the head of river estuaries, positions suitable for trading; the pattern is so obvious that it is largely taken for granted and not spoken of. A far more interesting criterion to consider is that of size: the maximum habitable area on offshore islands was never more than 55 ha. and often much less than that,[5] while the string of settlements on the south coast of Spain averaged about 4 or 5 ha.;[6] an area of 55 ha. has been calculated for seventh-century Carthage, matching that of the mother colony in the East. Now compare this to the earliest, Greek island-settlement in the West, Pithekoussai established by Euboeans in about 760 BC: the habitable area on Monte di Vico on Ischia overlooking two coves stretches for one kilometre and is equivalent to a staggering 600 ha. (Ridgway 1992: 83; 1994: 39-40). To me, this observation is an eloquent reflection of the Greek colonial phenomenon, that essentially saw Greeks going westwards with the clear intention to colonize, to take possession of land and vast agricultural territory and to trade.[7]

The earliest evidence for Phoenician religious sites in territory outside the homeland are found at Kition-Kathari in Cyprus, at Kommos in Crete, and at Tas-Silg in Malta. Kommos is an exceptional case, because religious activity never attained the proportions of the other two sites: in terms of size, both building and offerings recall the situation at the chapel in Sarepta frequented by the craftspeople there. We can only speculate on the role the Phoenicians played at Kommos in a convenient location

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[5] Tyre had an area of 53 ha. (Aubet 1994: 40), Arwad 30 ha. (Dunand & Saliby 1985: 5), Motya 45 ha. (*Mozia 1989*: 7), Gades (Cádiz) 8 ha. (Aubet 1995: 51).

[6] Toscanos reached 12 ha. from its original 2.5 ha. towards the end of the seventh century BC (Aubet 1995: 51). The settlement at Sa Caleta on the south-west coast of Ibiza measured about 4 ha. in the mid-seventh century BC (Ramón 1991: 178).

which marks the entry into the Cretan interior along the Messara plain and the shortest sea crossing to Africa. The construction of a Phoenician shrine – the symbolic focus of the ritual – in 800 BC, *after* contacts had already been established for at least 50 years, clearly indicates that a place for worship and praying was required on foreign soil. The fact that the shrine was built of local stone precludes the suggestion that the religious symbol was brought over from the mother-city in the Levant, as is known to have happened in Greek colonization (de Polignac 1995: 91). The shrine lasted for another 150 years seeing Phoenician sea-merchants pass by en route westwards while Assyrians held on to their parent cities, until the rise of Babylon and its conquests in the Near East disrupted the Aegean-Levantine trade network (S. Morris 1992: 148-149). In sharp contrast to Greek colonial situations in south Italy and Sicily (de Polignac 1995: 98-106) the chapel at Kommos cannot be called a deliberate statement of possession of territory; rather, it was more a Cretan way of coming to terms with Phoenicians on Cretan land and it is within this framework that the mixed nature of the cult should be understood.

At Kition-Kathari in Cyprus, on the other hand, the Phoenicians built their urban religious site to Astarte (*not* Melqart) above an earlier autochthonous Bronze Age temple, around 850 BC. The action would seem to be deliberate, a way of legitimizing an extension of Phoenician territory abroad. Built by the city walls that surround an area of about 70 ha., and conveniently overlooking the narrow stretch of coastal plain and the sea, the size of the temple was certainly meant to impress and to glorify the deity inside it for about four centuries, in a way that the monuments at nearby Bamboula never did. An inscriptional datum indicates that the religious establishment became a pole of attraction sufficient to bring a man all the way from inland Tamassos to pay homage to Astarte, and shave his head in a gesture of submission to her. The scale of the complex, which far outshadows the modest work which the community at Kommos could manage, suggests that this territorial enterprise was a matter for the state, most probably the Tyrian one. Having said that, however, it is difficult to gauge how much autonomy was enjoyed by the Phoenicians

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[7] See de Polignac 1995: 90. By the fifth century BC, Metapontum in southern Italy had agricultural plots averaging between 13 and 26 ha. in its *chora* (Carter 1996).

at Kition. Recent scholarship continues to be perplexed at defining the nature and political structure of Kition before 500 BC: the city's position as an independent kingdom is assured only if we assume that Kition is the "new city" on Sargon's tribute list on the stele set up there in 707 BC (Yon 1997: 11-12). The perpetuation of Cypriot cults inside the temple, after a haitus of 150 years, suggests that religion had a double orientation: it not only served Phoenicians but it also served the Cypriots, bringing together locals and foreigners, and perhaps serving as a vector for a process of acculturation by which Cypriots became more and more acquainted with Egyptianizing traits owed to Phoenicia rather than directly to Egypt. It is difficult to talk of Cypriots as passive receivers, however, in the way that scholars of the Greek world talk of natives living away from the prime coastal locations visiting mediatory cult sites on the fringes of a colonial territory (de Polignac 1995: 106-118): the new Phoenician temple closely followed an earlier plan in size and orientation and native votive offerings in clay survived down to 600 BC at Kathari and 550 BC at Bamboula, while in the mountainous interior it was Cypriots who might have accommodated a Phoenician cult in their own "religious territory", as the offerings and cult equipment at the rural sanctuary of Meniko-Litharkes attest. After 525 BC, Cyprus like Phoenicia falls under Persian domination with its policies of autonomy and local entrepreneurship (Elayi 1989; Reyes 1994: chapter 5), but the contacts are pursued and Cypriots are recorded making votive offerings in Phoenician sanctuaries at Bostan esh-Sheikh and the *Ma'abed* at Amrith.

The arrival of the Phoenicians in Malta in the late eighth century BC was marked by the dedication of a cult to Astarte (*not* Melqart) at Tas-Silg, above a Bronze Age settlement of unclear nature, which in turn was situated on top of a prehistoric temple of the Copper Age (Tarxien Phase, about 2500 BC). The shallow stratigraphy at the site, disturbed by centuries of rebuilding and modern agricultural activity, makes it difficult to gauge how much remained visible of these earlier constructions when the Phoenicians arrived. On the other hand, it is unlikely that the Phoenicians built their sanctuary here simply because large blocks of stone were readily available to be quarried. I have already argued elsewhere (Vella 1997b) that attempts to see continuity between an alleged indigenous cult and the Phoenician one

on the basis of a prehistoric statue of the "mother goddess" type retrieved on site, are misplaced and suffer from a misunderstanding of the statue's findspot and of the processes which formed the archaeological record. Instead I would suggest that by incorporating the ruins of the earlier monuments into their new buildings, the Phoenicians sought to connect themselves with an alien and distant past to justify their possession of new territory.[8] The strategic location of the sanctuary, on a prominent hillock overlooking two ideal landing places to the south-west and north-east, would turn the construction of a religious edifice into a deliberate symbolic attempt to consecrate the appropriation of new territory very close to the first landing place, presumed to have been in the bays below. So far no material evidence has been recovered to suggest that any form of permanent settlement took place round the sanctuary: the Phoenicians moved 15 km. inland where rock-cut tombs dated to the first quarter of the seventh century BC testify to the occupation of the most strategic of promontories overlooking the entire central plain of the island, where fertile soil, natural springs and rock scarps provided attractive resources and security. From here, the Maltese Phoenician community could gaze out over its territory and see the sanctuary of Astarte in the distance, standing guard at the point of access from the outside world. Although the sanctuary was held in reverence and enjoyed fame for its riches in antiquity (Cicero, *Verrines* II, 4, 103-104), excavations have not yielded anything that would in any way approach the tens of thousands of offerings recovered in similar extra-urban Greek sanctuaries (see Snodgrass 1989-1990). Nothing much can be classified as prestigious and foreign, except for the odd piece of ivory, bronze, and gold. Instead, some of the offerings brought as gestures of thanksgiving to the deity were presented on locally produced open vessels inscribed with abbreviated dedications to Astarte and perhaps Tanit. On-going excavations of a fourth-third century BC midden at the site now show that the offerings included a variety of seafood and fowl of the type recorded by Joseph Shaw from Kommos and reflecting an accessible, egalitarian and communal cult, probably involving ritual dining, oriented more towards a popular, agrarian and mariners' world. The offerings made

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[8] As to how past remains are appropriated to further political agendas, see Bradley 1987. In a study about pilgrimage in the Andes, Michael Sallnow (1992: 141) argued that the proliferation of shrines over or near indigenous sacred sites was a deliberate attempt by European missionaries who

were presumably brought over by the dedicants and simply surrendered to the priests and to the deity, but the container would have been bought here. The simple, abbreviated inscriptions suggest that literacy did not impart a sense of awe and mystery on the community; it could hardly have operated to legitimise the power of the ruling, presumably priestly, class (see Bowman & Wolf 1994). After 218 BC the sanctuary was appropriated by the Romans and Astarte simply became assimilated to Hera and Juno, both protectresses of agrarian space. Perhaps more than anywhere else in the Phoenician possessions overseas, Tas-Silg provides a clear idea of how a non-urban sanctuary symbolized the fact that the land had acquired the status of a territory.

The Maltese situation contrasts sharply with that of the small settlements or factories along the south coast of Andalucia in Spain. Excavations there have produced no evidence for religious sites, despite the fact that so many have now been partially excavated. This would suggest that the settlers never attained a level of development in which religion constituted an autonomous and public domain clearly indicated by special arrangements made to accommodate it. But here we risk falling victim to an argument from silence, and it is hard to believe that a cult which would have ensured the cohesion of a small group of expedition members did not exist. It would have been on a modest scale, as at Kommos in Crete, rather than the much later set-up at Oumm el-'Amed in Ptolemaic Phoenicia where two large sanctuaries were surrounded by industrial installations (**FIGURE 20**). Undoubtedly, cult sites will eventually turn up in places where we expect them to: the settlement of Castillo de Doña Blanca founded by Phoenicians from Gadir in the mid-eighth century BC, guarding the entrance to the Rio Guadalete and the interior, is a perfect candidate (Ruíz Mata & Pérez 1995). On the south coast of Andalucia the territory of the small Phoenician factories *was* "ritualized", but it was death ritual that marked the extent of their possession, if that is the right term. Most cemeteries were located outside the main settlement: such is the case with Chorreras which had its cemetery at Lagos (Aubet 1994: fig. 88), and with all other Phoenician settlements in the West which were built on low promontories. The dispersed settlements at the mouth of river

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'anticipated a simple transfer of religious sentiments from pagan idol to Christian icon'. This does not appear to have been the case at Tas-Silg, if ever such a change would have left any material traces.

estuaries, however, reveal a different pattern. The offshore island of Almuñécar had its cemeteries on the mainland on either side of the Rio Verde at Cerro de San Cristobal, Puente de Noy, and Velilla (Niemeyer 1990: fig. 7). The settlements on peninsulas such as Toscanos and Morro de Mezquitilla had their respective cemeteries on the opposite bank of the Rio Vélez and the Rio Algarrobo at Cerro del Mar and Trayamar (Aubet 1994: fig. 88), while at Cádiz the cemetery was at the other side of a navigable channel in the Puertas de Tierra region (Aubet 1994: fig. 65). It is tempting to read more into this pattern, mirrored in the Phoenician homeland at Tyre and after 600 BC at Motya, beyond the functional requirements which would necessitate that a tiny settlement have its burial facilities outside it. Aubet (1994: 47) remarks that 'this does not appear to have been a random occurrence', but does not elaborate. The case of Toscanos and Morro de Mezquitilla clearly indicates that it was the wish of the inhabitants to have the dead buried across the waters on the opposite side of a river estuary. Standing at both sites today it is difficult to visualize the extent of the ancient coastline, now confirmed by geomorphologists (Schubart 1991), because the rivers have long silted up and the district consists of lowland terrace farming. But a body of water would have clearly demarcated island from mainland, settlement from cemetery, and the death ritual would have clearly involved ferrying the corpse across the water. As with the Levantine Phoenician sanctuaries discussed, where water demarcated architectural space and regulated movement (**4.2.4**), the crossing between settlement and cemetery would have imbued the sea with the transitional or "liminal" qualities that anthropologists hold to be essential requisites of death ritual (Morris 1992: 10).[9] This argument finds corroboration in a sixth-century BC inscriptional datum written on papyrus and placed in an amulet from a Phoenician tomb in Malta's interior: here Egyptian Isis, who guides the deceased's spirit to the netherworld, instructs the deceased that an adversary, presumably barring access to the netherworld, had to be 'trampled over the waters' and 'prostrated on the sea' (Gouder & Rocco 1975; Hölbl 1989: 116-123, plate 16.1a, 1b).

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[9] On the liminal qualities of the sea in the ethnographic literature, see the comments by Helms 1988: 24-25, 86-87.

To conclude about the island-settlements in southern Spain, the "frontier" marked by the tombs would have been more conceptual than physical: the tombs were not marked to be seen from afar, as with the Persian-period Phoenician mausolea at Amrith in the territory of Arwad; neither did they set up commemorative stelae of the type that much later marked the graves of priests, olive pressers, and porters at the industrial town of Oumm el-'Amed, with inscriptions that could be read to reveal the status that the dead held in life (**Table 3.3**); the tombs here were concealed and discrete.[10] "Being seen" does not appear to have been a preoccupation with these tiny communities of Phoenician settlers on the south coast of Spain, despite the fact that the burials reveal workmanship of a very high standard and cremated remains were exceptionally placed in alabaster urns inscribed with Royal cartouches brought over from Egypt. Here, groups of merchants were reinforcing family ties through death ritual.

Sixth-century Sidon in the Phoenician homeland provides a contrast to the situations discussed thus far, where it has been difficult to tease out the full implications that the construction of a sanctuary had on society. A combination of inscriptional, textual, and archaeological sources have enabled Josette Elayi (1989; Elayi & Sapin 1998) to draw an exceptionally rich picture of politics and society in Sidon not matched for any other Phoenician city in the Levant. Sidon fell under the domination of the Achaemenid Persians in 549 or 539 BC, and was expected to pay tributes and taxes annually to the Persian king. Although the city owed ultimate allegiance to the Persians, and might have even been the seat of the Persian satrap (governor) responsible for the whole coastal province, it preserved autonomous socio-political structures: as Elayi and Sapin put it, Sidon constituted a 'state within a state' (1998: 152). In Sidon, royalty comprised the characteristic element of the political set-up: the king held his office for life and the title was hereditary; he commanded the naval fleet and the army, participating in battles, and regulated the minting of coins. More important for the present study is the fact that the king was the priest of Astarte: on the reutilized Egyptian sarcophagus of Tabnit (*RES* 1202) the king is first defined

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[10] At Almuñécar, alabaster cinerary urns were deposited at the bottom of grave pits, between 2 and 5 metres in depth (Aubet 1994: 285).

as 'priest of Astarte' and only then as 'king of the Sidonians', a formulary already adopted by his father Eshmunazar I mentioned in the same inscription (Elayi 1989: 50-52). The prominence given to the priestly title emphasizes the importance given by the kings of Sidon to their religious prerogatives. The kings were responsible for building temples in the territory of the city (**FIGURE 12**): King Eshmunazar II and his mother, the priestess of Astarte, had a temple built for Astarte at 'Sidon-by-the-sea' (SDN YM) and 'installed' Astarte and Eshmun in a new, unidentified site at SMM 'DRM. These acts, together with the construction of a sanctuary to Eshmun 'at the source of YDL in the mountain' are recorded in neat script on the king's Egyptian sarcophagus (*CIS* I, 3). His son, Bodashtart carried out works at the temple of Eshmun identified with the site at Bostan esh-Sheikh, 4 km. north-east of the city: his actions, dated to about 530 BC, are commemorated on twelve monumental inscriptions buried deep inside the masonry of the podium.

The possibility that Bostan esh-Sheikh could have been the site of a cult associated with water before the Persian period cannot of course be denied. Indeed, this would find corroboration in the retrieval of Cypriot statuary in terracotta and limestone dating to the beginning of the sixth century BC, before the first works on the monumental podium were carried out by Eshmunazar II. In this context, however, it is not important to decide when such a religious site could have been used, but instead to query why the cult took on a form that rendered it more visible materially and socially. The appropriation of the spring at Bostan esh-Sheikh in a monumental manner appears to have happened already during the Neo-Babylonian period, but the surviving remains do not allow us to say much in this regard. What is interesting instead is the fact that the Sidonians decided to leave part of the earlier monument standing, demolishing the rest to make way for the colossal podium (**FIGURE 15**), as if this was a deliberate act, a visual and stark reminder of possession of site and land. As at Amrith in the territory of Arwad, the appropriation of the spring and the water sources associated with it was an important political and religious affair: an unpublished inscription from Bostan esh-Sheikh mentions repair works carried out by King Bodashtart on the conduits which delivered water to the city. According to Elayi and Sapin (1998: 148) this datum shows that the control of water was in the hands of

the Sidonians, and essentially a royal prerogative, whereas in another province (Mesopotamia) the Persian sovereigns monopolized the water supply.

With the foregoing observations in mind, I would argue that at Sidon religion was employed by the kings to further the political power they wielded, through what Roy Rappaport (1971) called 'rituals of sanctification'. In other words, rituals enacted by the king, both monarch and priest, would have ensured that the people accepted his edicts and directives, by imparting on those edicts some of the unquestionable nature of religious dogma. Let me put it another way. The power held by the Persian kings over the province was not a matter to be taken lightly and the Achaemenids could strike hard whenever they wanted: a Sidonian revolt in 350 BC was violently repressed by Artaxerxes bringing to an end the hegemony Sidon had enjoyed for more than 150 years over the rest of the Phoenician cities (Elayi & Sapin 1998: 154). Coming to terms with the Persian power which carried out periodic controls in its tributary states, meant that the Sidonian kings had to embark on a programme of activities to promote themselves and their city, seeking the people's approval and pride along the way: building monumental sanctuaries around Sidon's civic territory was one way of doing this, and at Bostan esh-Sheikh a large parcel of land was set aside for a cult to Eshmun, a religious space clearly oriented in relation to the cardinal points; depositing prestigious votive statuary in marble inscribed with a clear record of their deed was another. Literacy appears to have served to accentuate the power of the Sidonian rulers: the protocol of listing the patronymics on dedications was clearly used to legitimise their high-ranking status, and a desire to link themselves with a glorious past. Yet, there is tension here. The monumental inscriptions that glorified the king's deed were buried inside the foundations for the podium at Bostan esh-Sheikh: clearly they were not meant to exercise power through their location in space and the way they looked;[11] the inscriptions only make sense as long as they are not divorced from the rituals undoubtedly carried out when the blocks were laid down. On the surface, conformity was the best option as impiety would have been bad for business and for the rulers' status quo.

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[11] On the way that literacy can serve a political role and be used as a symbol of power, see Bowman & Wolf 1994: 8.

I would argue that what emerges as a crucial aspect of Phoenician society in Sidon and Amrith in the Persian period is the importance of "being seen". At Amrith, monumental mausolea pre-dating the Alexandrian conquest of the Levant, towered above underground hypogea where bodies were laid to rest in limestone and marble sarcophagi (Will 1949). Territory was being marked out by sanctuaries and tombs in the landscape. I will not say that this testifies to a drastic change in religious behaviour from earlier times because sanctuaries in one of the principal Phoenician cities have not yet been excavated to justify the comparison, while Sarepta's chapel is distinct by virtue of its modest design and popular cult: it does show, however, that Phoenician society now seemed to be manifesting a devotion toward the gods with offerings that took forms designed to be durable: statuary in marble and in limestone flourished. These were "converted" offerings, as Snodgrass would call them (1989-1990: 291), commissioned or bought for the express purpose of dedication, implying a conversion of part of the dedicant's wealth. Those who could only afford less, deposited terracotta figurines representing votaries bearing gifts, a scaled-down version of the larger types (Ganzamm *et al.* 1987: 91-94, plate 30-31).

In a cosmopolitan world that was coastal Phoenicia in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, with varied artistic styles that defy a neat definition and give Phoenician culture its tentacular and eclectic imprint, Sidon, Amrith and other cities were defining themselves by the degree of participation in the cults that they allowed to foreigners: Egyptianizing votive statuary sculpted in Cypriot limestone was deposited at the *Ma'abed* in Amrith presumably by the Phoenicians of Kition, while Cypriot pilgrims were making dedications in their own script to Phoenician deities at Sarepta and Sidon (**4.3**), and a trader from Jaffa – territory annexed by Eshmunazar II – was buried in the city (Elayi 1989: 65). This capacity to accommodate, absorb and reflect a variety of religious discourses would have imbued the sanctuary with a religious capital of the sort that anthropologists link with pilgrimage shrines (Eade & Sallnow 1991: 15). It is also possible to surmise that rituals in Persian-period Phoenicia were being used to negotiate the locals' own relationships to an outside society, as Baumann puts it, 'to widen the values celebrated from perpetuation to assimilation and cultural change' (1992: 113). This "openness" survived well into Hellenistic

times: there are three times as many Sidonians abroad in inscriptions as there are Aradians, and one inscription records that the philhellenic king of Sidon, Abdastart I, was made an honorary citizen of Athens in the 360s under the Hellenized name of Straton, giving Sidonian traders extra-territorial rights while at Athens (Grainger 1991: 205, 212); back home at the sanctuary of Kharayeb, the panoply of themes and richness of the offerings, made from moulds found on the site, testify to the variety of the donors passing through this place in a rural zone of Tyre's hinterland.

It is doubted whether the monumentality and preoccupation with display visible in Sidon in the fifth century were ever attained in the Phoenician possessions in the West. The exception would probably have been Carthage if we go by the descriptions of temples given by the ancient authors, or see in the Numidian kingdom a reflection of the Carthaginian state, with its imposing third-century BC mausolea at Medracen and Dougga built by Carthaginian architects using Numidian workmen (Lancel 1995a: 307-310). The only religious buildings to have been excavated in Carthage are too small to suggest that state intervention played a major role in the rituals undertaken there, and the busts of warriors and representations of Victory at the chapel of Sidi-bou-Saïd are suggestive of a cult that could accommodate the warlike fervour undoubtedly engulfing Carthage in the second century BC. It is to Sardinia that we have to turn to see how Punic society went about organizing possession of new territory they had settled on.

The earliest Phoenician settlements in Sardinia are located on the west and south coasts of the island, at Tharros, Sulcis, Bithia, Nora, and Cagliari. The offshore island of Sant'Antioco in the south-west corner of Sardinia provides the earliest, securely datable Phoenician presence on the island, about 750 BC.[12] It is from here that the Phoenicians of Sulcis (the ancient name of Sant'Antioco) moved 17 km.

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[12] This obviously does not take into account the much debated Nora stele. The date in question is provided by an urn painted in the Euboean Late Geometric manner, apparently produced at Pithekoussai, and deposited at the tophet at Sulcis (see Ridgway 1992: 114). The discovery in 1990, at the nuragic village of Sant'Imbenia near Alghero in NW Sardinia, of Euboean pottery of the pendant concentric semi-circle variety, dated to about 750 BC, together with Phoenician plates and amphorae containing 43 kg. of bun ingots of copper (Bafico *et al.* 1995), are lending weight to the exciting argument that promotes Euboean-Phoenician partnership in commercial ventures in the West. See Ridgway 1994: 41, Docter & Niemeyer 1994.

inland to set up a fortified settlement above a hill, guarding the entrance into the Cixerri valley across the highlands of the Iglesiente (Moscati 1965b) (**FIGURE 75**). True to a definition of a colonial settlement pattern (Roberts 1996: 129), Monte Sirai is a perfect example of a new settlement type with urban planning that contrasts with the traditional forms and patterns of the indigenous Nuragic people (Køllund 1997), something that we catch a glimpse of in southern Spain (Aubet 1995; Niemeyer 1995).[13] Although a cult developed at Monte Sirai in the third century BC, perhaps even earlier, centred around the statuette of a female divinity with cult equipment that is usually associated with Demeter, it is at Antas deep in the Iglesiente that religious ritual to the god Sid took on a form that rendered it more visible both in material and social terms. Unfortunately, the published accounts make it difficult to draw a clear picture of the activities that were carried out at Antas before the Romans decided to build their own temple to Sardus Pater, restored some time after 213 AD by the emperor Caracalla. Ritual activity appears to have started already in the sixth century BC, and in the fourth an inscription on a bronze plaque which commemorates some restoration works was deposited here (*Antas 1969*: No. IV). It was on the eve of the Roman conquest of Sardinia, set by historians to 238 BC, however, that ritual activity flourished with pilgrims leaving indisputable records of their actions on stone, marble and bronze.

The sanctuary at Antas was not sited to be seen from afar as a constant reminder to the coastal dweller that this marked the limit of human implantation and the limit of the city's control over the terrain. If the Punic Sardinians thought that this was essential then Matzanni high up on the flanks of Monte Linas guarding the Cixerri valley and the route into the Campidano, and perfectly visible on the skyline from Sant'Antioco and Monte Sirai (**Figure 75**), would have been the perfect place to site a temple; the remains there, however, still await excavation (**3.8.5**). Instead, Antas is situated in the heart of a different world, in a steep and inaccessible mountain range, isolated and cut-off, surrounded by hills and by nature. The area is rich in

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[13] Monte Sirai is not the only such fortified settlement known. Ferruccio Barreca had surveyed other similar sites that, combined, were seen to constitute a true fortified front deep inside the Sardinian interior (Barreca 1978). The dating of the remains, however, remains rather vague, but the necropolis

metalliferous ore deposits, and falls in between the coastal lowlands (Sulcitano) occupied by the Phoenicians and the middle-upland regions (Marmilla and Trexenta) settled by autochthonous people (Webster 1996: 157-159; van Dommelen 1997b). The remains at Antas are best defined as constituting a frontier sanctuary, built to consecrate the extent of Punic territorial interests. Its position is every bit as significant. The inscriptions deposited at the sanctuary in the third century BC allow us to identify three of the pilgrims: two came from Karales (*krl*: Cagliari; *Antas 1969*: Nos 1, 2) and one from Sulcis (*slky*: Sant'Antioco; *Antas 1969*: No. 3); in two of these cases, and in another recently published (Garbini 1997: No. 23), donors were holders of authority, suffetes (*šptm*) or supreme magistrates, representing the people's assembly, that is 'the people of Sulcis' and 'the people of Karales' respectively.[14] These inscriptional data suggest that in southern Sardinia no major city was strong enough to eclipse its neighbour, and that this sanctuary was shared. The coastal cities were not close enough to enable visits on a regular basis: Sant'Antioco is 50 km. away, while Cagliari is distant 75 km. This is also precluded by the fact that the quantity of offerings does not in any way reach the tens of thousands found in Greek extra-urban sanctuaries. Rather, visits would have probably taken the form of an occasional pilgrimage or procession starting from the coastal inhabited area and moving inland across hills and valley bottoms. The arduous trip would have heightened the religious experience of the pilgrimage, anticipating arriving would have been as important as arriving and being there. The official aspect of the cult was carefully recorded on plinths; plaques would have been suspended so as to be seen and presumably read by visitors. The popular facet of the cult is only given away by the retrieval of a small number of amulets (*Antas 1969*: plate 41) which betray the survival of Egyptian motifs and themes, whereas we can only speculate that the ash and bones noted at the site were the result of sacrificial offerings for which pilgrims would have paid, explaining the presence of a fair number of coins from the site. Literacy was being used to assert power and confirm the link that existed between the coast and this inland site. Indeed it is worth remembering that if it was not for the

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at Pani Loriga near Santadi, 26 km. NE of Sulcis, is dated to the end of the sixth century BC (Tore 1975).

[14] On the role of the suffetes in Punic political history, see Lancel (1995a: 113-117) and Manfredi 1997.

references to the toponyms in the inscriptions it would have been difficult to envisage a link between distant Karales and Antas. Of course this does not exclude the possibility that Antas could have been also visited by pilgrims from coastal sites to the north, including Neapolis, which is less than 60 km. away.

Now, it would be interesting to say more about the extent of Punic penetration into the Sardinian interior, on the basis of what is known about Antas. Was the sanctuary marking a frontier between "Punic/foreign" and "local", or was the pilgrimage a way of creating an awareness within Punic society of its territorial boundaries at a time when the central Mediterranean was in turmoil over the conflict with Rome, and those same boundaries disputed? I would suggest that the latter scenario is more likely. Having said that, however, I am aware that the data available not only refuse to gel into a clear and unambiguous picture, but a cultural process is difficult to construct, and more difficult to verify, given the impossibility of reading any sort of sequence in the deposits at the site. With the exception of one artefact, a Nuragic model of a dagger sheath with three stilettos, all the reported finds from Antas are Punic rather than indigenous.[15] This does not say much, however, if we decide to interpret the occurrence of this particular object as a votive gesture by a Punic soldier returning from a successful skirmish. This suggestion would clash with the contention held by many that see a peaceful co-existence with the natives and local involvement in the development of the cult at Antas: the name of the deity, Sid, was given the epithet Babay (Sardus Pater in Latin), a word unknown in Semitic but still in use in Sardinia today to mean father or ancestor (Lipinski 1995a: 332-350). Although warriors *did* frequent the sanctuary, as is inferred from the retrieval of a number of small iron spears, it does not necessarily follow that this frontier was of a warlike nature because a very small iron anchor reported from the same site (Barreca 1969: fig. 6) clearly suggests that coastal people were coming here to invoke the deity for protection. Likewise, soldiers could have come here from the coastal cities to pray, expecting protection from the deity in armed conflict.

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[15] The object has two suspension holes. It was not published in the preliminary report, but is simply illustrated in Barreca 1981: fig. 413. Its exact findspot is not known. On these Nuragic artefacts, see Serra Ridgway 1986: 86-87.

If we look beyond Antas, recent survey work in west-central Sardinia has shown clearly that penetration into the interior was peaceful: this happened after 550 BC, and gained momentum in the course of the fifth century, when small-scale Punic settlements flourished in the rural hinterland of Neapolis, on the Gulf of Oristano (**FIGURE 102**), and into the Campidano, merging comfortably with an indigenous settlement pattern established two centuries earlier (van Dommelen 1997b: 264-269). This datum contrasts sharply with the earlier Phoenician phase where settlements were tied to the coastal fringe of an immense territory, happy to use their location as a convenient bridgehead to the far west. Combined with the earliest dates available for Antas, this suggests that Carthaginian involvement was instrumental to kick off a process of urbanization and acquisition of territory in Sardinia, exactly at the time when an alliance between southern Etruscans and Carthaginians was forged and sanctified by the installation of a 'sacred place' or shrine to the Phoenician Astarte and the Etruscan Uni, at the port-sanctuary of Caere; a bilingual record of this action was inscribed on gold sheets and nailed at the sanctuary, presumably to be seen and read by visiting traders and pilgrims. In Sardinia, the Iglesiente highlands provided metal ore, undoubtedly an enterprise controlled by the Carthaginian state through local intermediaries, probably from Sulcis and Karales, while the Campidano and the Sulcitano provided the 'Sardinian grain' needed to sustain the Carthaginian military campaigns in Sicily, spoken about by the ancient authors (Moscati *et al.* 1997: 99-101). It is here, in this agrarian space, that a cult to Demeter flourished in the third century BC, high up in the hills at Strumpu Bagoi, Terreseu near Narcao, 18 km. to the north-west of Sulcis (**FIGURE 75**).

The introduction of the cult of the Greek goddesses Demeter and Kore in Carthage took place in 396 BC (Xella 1969). The event is narrated by Diodorus Siculus (XIV, 77, 5) who explains how the cult was set up in reparation for the profanations and the sacrilege committed by Himilco who allowed the looting of a temple to the goddesses in Syracuse in that year. Archaeological proof for the existence of the cult in Carthage is available (Lipinski 1995a: 374-376), and by 300 BC Sardinian mints were putting the image of Kore and an equine protome on their coins. The natural setting of the sanctuary at Strumpu Bagoi suggests that the Punic

farmers and shepherds were familiar with the chthonic and agrarian powers of the Greek goddess: Demeter not only guaranteed the fertility of the surrounding fields and water courses, but also that of flocks and herds, especially of the pig (**PLATE 20d**), the animal sacred to her (but abominated by Melqart's priests at Gades), whose maintenance guaranteed the goddess her sacrifices, remains of which have been found. She would also have imparted that same fertility to the worshippers who were committed to a wandering life away from the urban settlements on the coast. The strategic location of the sanctuary, off a route that links two valleys (Cixerri and Mannu) suggests that this religious space was a rallying point, ensuring the religious and social cohesion of various groups scattered over an agrarian space. It is hard to tell whether Demeter was assimilated to a Punic deity at Strumpu Bagoi: the terracotta representations of a female with outstretched arms from the site, perhaps evidence of a dance, are not known in the classical iconography of the goddess (Beschi 1988), so a local, popular development might be seen there.

It is at the Cueva de Es Cuieram in Ibiza that we have clear evidence for the assimilation of Demeter with Tanit and the Hellenized Isis. The cult was practiced inside the recesses of a large cave, in the highlands to the north-west of the island (**FIGURE 114**), from the fifth century BC, probably reaching its heyday in the following two or three hundred years. The timing coincides with the period that saw the population centred around the well-protected natural harbour of Ibiza (**FIGURE 117**) thriving with 4000 hypogea dug into the hillside at Puig des Molins in the span of 150 years; this is indeed, a far cry from the first metal-processesing settlement set up by Phoenicians from Andalucia at Sa Caleta on the south-west coast about 650 BC. (Ramón 1991). Movement into the rural areas started around the beginning of the fifth century: farmsteads and small cemeteries each in clusters of about twenty rock-cut tombs have been identified (Gómez Bellard 1990; 1995: 770), recalling an identical settlement pattern known for Punic Malta (Vidal Gonzaléz 1996: 33-34, 97-99; Said-Zammit 1997). But in Malta the situation is inverted: there, the main urban settlement was inland, and the extra-urban sanctuary at Tas-Silg overlooked the harbour and the entrance into Punic territory, with Astarte and Hera serving mariners as well as farmers of the surrounding catchment area; at Ibiza, the cave-sanctuary 20 km. inland

overlooked not the urban nucleus on the harbour, but another stretch of coast to the north-east. The cult necessitated the presentation of offerings to the deity: some, involving animals, would have been transformed through the act of sacrifice, if, that is, we go by the reference to ash and bones noted by successive excavators; other offerings including the figurines and statuettes of a sort that are known only from this cave, were most certainly obtained on the spot for the express purpose of dedication. This cave-sanctuary up in a highland territory would have brought an agrarian and pastoral community dispersed in the surrounding countryside together: if Demeter kept the chthonic functions she had in the Greek world and at Strumpu Bagoi in Sardinia, and likewise Tanit at Carthage and Isis in the Hellenistic East, the preoccupation with fertility of flocks, herds, and fields, would have been harnessed through ritual action and the mediation of the goddess.

I will end by making reference to the temple of Bes at Bithia on the south coast of Sardinia, not so much to stress the fact that this is the only site considered in the present work that has provided us with a large cult image and a relatively large collection of terracotta votaries to go with it, as to comment on the inscription which was recovered there and to relate this datum to a phenomenon seen elsewhere. The Neo-Punic inscription on the fragmented marble slab is of an official, commemorative nature: it relates the construction of altars by 'all the people of Bithia' at the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (AD 161-180) or Caracalla (AD 211-217) (*ICO* Sard Npu. 8). It is difficult to think that the Punic letters and Punic words no longer conveyed any specific meaning to the people of Bithia: as Fergus Millar (1983: 57) has argued, the importance of this inscription lies in the fact that four hundred years after the Roman occupation of the island, 'Punic was still known, was used, and could be composed and written'. Even the references to the suffetes, the Punic magistrates, included on the inscription for dating purposes, show that public offices were identified in the way the populace at Bithia knew best, the Punic way. On the available evidence it is impossible to judge how much of the old Punic cult survived when the inscription was commissioned; rather, we should take Bithia as an eloquent example of how Phoenician and Punic identity survived new political veneers.

5.2 Concluding remarks.

There have been no attempts to treat religious sites as archaeological evidence to infer at least *something* about Phoenician and Punic society. In this chapter an attempt has been made to redress this issue. The similarities and peculiarities of the situations encountered in the foregoing discussion allow us to conclude that to speak of Phoenician or Punic social structure in one broad sweep is misplaced: unforeseen experiences in new spatial contexts elicited different responses from Phoenician society, despite the fact that a common attitude informed a process whereby appropriation of land and territory was carried out through religious ritual. That was the case at Kommos, Kition-Kathari, and Tas-Silg. Extra-urban religious sites follow the rise of urbanism in the Punic west when Carthage controlled the older Phoenician possessions. As a state trying to set an idealized image of itself, a unique identity, at a time when that same identity was being challenged, first by Greece and later by Rome, it set goals and pursued them: an extra-urban sanctuary, like Antas in Sardinia, constituted an affirmation of Punic sovereignty and a place where the various social components of a city – the magistrates (suffetes) and the people's assembly – could intermingle and cohere. Out in the countryside, a foreign cult appropriated the agrarian territory of the urban settlements. Ideology needs architecture for its fullest expression; monumental architecture dwarfs the individual and dominates crowds, creating a mood of solidity and stability. In Phoenicia, the Persian occupation provided a catalyst for change. In Sidon, kings were projecting images of power of the sort never seen before, through consumption and display. The efforts undertaken reveal a sense of community that goes beyond that provided by kinship. Resources and energies were mobilized to mark the city's territorial extent and honour its deity Eshmun. Religion was clearly the language in which political decisions were couched.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

'In this sanctuary of Asclepius a man of Sidon entered upon an argument with me. He declared that the Phoenicians had better notions about the gods than the Greeks [...] I replied that I accepted his statements, but that the argument was as much Greek as Phoenician [...]'

– PAUSANIAS VII, 23, 7-8

A few months back I was delivering a paper to a learned audience of ancient historians when I asked them whether they could recall any "Phoenician temple". Above my head I projected two slides: the first showing the great semitist Ernest Renan contemplating the beauties of the Greek temple to Athena on the Parthenon, before he embarked on the famed survey mission to Phoenicia; the second showed nothing, an empty screen. My question elicited empty gazes and a silence, and the response, or rather the lack of it, justified my interest in a subject that has not attracted the attention it deserves, and that has kept me busy for the last years. I close with a summary of the points I have tried to make.

The primary aim of this work has been to gather a list of alleged Phoenician and Punic religious sites in order to reveal the basis and criteria on which earlier scholars have defended their sacred nature. To a cynic this might appear a rather dull way of doing research, that I wanted to disprove things that others have said for the sake of disproving them, and that there is nothing novel here because in many cases the same conclusions have been reached: Sarepta *had* a religious site and *still* has one,

as does Kommos, or Sidon, or Malta, and so forth. This is not the case. I strongly believe that in trying to make a case for each site in an explicit way, stating the assumptions so that the reader can support or refute the interpretative exercise, I have tried to shed the discipline of the circularity that has afflicted the argument of past studies for a very long time. The flaws in some of the views expressed in past works are self-evident in CHAPTER IV. Rather than take these sites as givens for discussing religious beliefs and practices as others have done (e.g. Brody 1996), I chose to go back to the original site reports and studies, to decide for myself what was *actually* found, rather than what others have been saying was found, and only then look for patterns and common denominators. To guide my investigations I have not proposed a general theory of religious ritual that can transcend context and analyst, and to which data can be readily "applied". The degree to which such a method exists in archaeology was assessed in CHAPTER II, where I argued that despite what has been written in recent years there is no hard and fast rule to recognise ritual from archaeological evidence. Instead the guiding principle that I have followed has been situational and contextual, and patterns sought in evidence for which the context of deposition and its formation have been duly assessed, classified by type and set in a time frame. Analysis was easier for sites where chronology and typology are well grounded, but confusing when the former is based on a poor or elusive yardstick. I cannot claim to have solved the problems on this point: much, much more remains to be done and I hope that the present work can form a basis, for myself and others, for taking research further.

The detailed study of the sites in chapters III and IV has shown that to speak of *the* Phoenician temple or *the* Punic temple in the same way that we speak of the Greek temple, where each monument conforms to a specfic plan, a specific elevation and a specific architectural order, is essentially misplaced. The picture which arose from the survey in CHAPTER III is a variegated one where the architectural morphology of the monuments is diverse, defying attempts at a neat, clear-cut and comfortable classification of Phoenician and Punic religious space. Having said that, however, subtleties that transcend generalities can be discerned. For a start, I have shown that the archaeological evidence does not support the orthodox view that Phoenician and

Punic temples all had tripartite plans, reminiscient of the biblical descriptions of Solomon's temple. Instead, I have argued that a core spatial unit, deeper than it is wide, with a shrine or offering table placed level with the floor, at one end opposite the entrance, usually facing eastwards, constitutes the essential feature of a built Phoenician and Punic religious space. I have also argued that the idea of sacred sites in nature as understood in biblical terms – the elusive "high place" – does not yield to archaeological evidence. Yet, I am *not* saying that such places did *not* exist, and in one part of this work a strong pattern detected in the data was best explained by suggesting that concerns with navigation and survival at sea animated prominent natural features in the maritime landscape with the sacred.

Of course, the deficiencies of archaeological evidence may mean that the differences noted in the gathered data could be illusory: ritual action could have been characterised by activities and objects that have not survived, obscuring subtle similarities that would have existed in antiquity. But to speculate on what was *not* found in each and every site is not helpful, so we simply have to work with what *is* available. Of course, the absence of a pattern is more problematic but an explanation is still demanded. Indeed I strongly believe that to the question quoted at the opening of CHAPTER I – "What is a Phoenician temple?" – qualifiers of time and space have to be added. When clear-cut features are not shared by a number of religious sites it is difficult to infer a generality of cult practice and of shared elements of belief. The explanation of variability was attempted in CHAPTER V where by changing the geographical scale of the system within which I studied similarities and differences in the preceding chapter, I was able to transform the problem. I argued that changing political situations in Phoenicia throughout the course of the first millennium BC, and unforseen and diverse experiences abroad, elicited different responses from Phoenician society as to how they went about organising their religious space and territory. Coastal Phoenicia in the first millennium was not closed on itself but formed part of an international, cosmopolitan world: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Cypriot, North Syrian, Israelite, Greek. The Phoenicians were willing to adapt themselves to changing political circumstances as long as their trading networks were maintained. The tentacular and eclectic nature of their art does not remain an

uncomfortable ambiguity as long as it is understood in this context: "Egyptianizing" for instance, would better be seen as an integral dimension of Phoenician culture rather than a passing phase. Past works have touched upon this problem of a Phoenician identity but the issue has not been addressed in the way it merits, because objects studied were divorced from their archaeological context. The evidence, however, persuades when it is *not* divorced from its context, and this is where I believe the contribution of this work lies: by noting the different artistic styles in their religious context, I was allowed to interpret their occurrence in social terms. So in Sidon, I have suggested that religion gave power to the kings, the ability to act and to control others and resources. Accommodating foreigners in religious ritual secured Sidon its openness to the world despite the fact that ultimately it was nothing but one part of an imperial province. Elsewhere, in the Punic west, foreign gods could be assimilated to local ones as long as ritual action imposed order on everyday life and on the anxiety in society.

If this work has shown, even in a minimal way, what can be achieved by paying detailed attention to the archaeological evidence, I hope that it has also confirmed how much remains to be done if we want to address Phoenician and Punic religion properly. The real payoff will come from new multi-disciplinary research projects, where systematic field surveys are given as much importance as excavations. The Phoenician and Punic countryside is still largely unknown, and pleas (Isserlin 1983) to redress the imbalance have gone largely unnoticed. It is impossible to conceive of Phoenicians in their homeland or in the west tied to miniscule islands with garden allotments that served to feed entire communities: the recent survey results from Sardinia have clearly shown that rural settlements exist (Annis *et al.* 1997); it only requires time, money and patience to find what is almost certainly there. It is through such studies that we can get a better understanding of sites like Antas or Strumpu Bagoi in Sardinia, or Kharayeb in Lebanon. With regard to excavations, I strongly feel that interest in architectural remains of a religious site should be complemented by the systematic excavation of middens: it is here that the material residues of ritual actions often lie – bones, shells, seeds, lipids, ash, pottery, figurines, the list is endless. The careful excavation of such middens at Kommos in Crete and at

Kition-Kathari in Cyprus have provided interesting data and it is with anticipation that we await the publication of the final reports which will no doubt enhance our knowledge of Phoenician ritual at these two sites. But unless such attempts are emulated elsewhere we cannot start approaching Phoenician and Punic ritual from a broader perspective. The on-going excavations of the University of Malta at Tas-Silg are producing rich floral and faunal material which eight excavation campaigns in the 1960s only mention in passing. No major architectural remains have been uncovered that would attract attention and make headlines, but instead piles and piles of broken pottery set in ashy deposits full of sea-urchin needles, limpets, oysters, coral, fish and bird bones, inscribed pottery plates, and so on and so forth. Excavation of such deposits is a long and arduous task, the time needed for their analysis even longer, and for the results to be fully assimilated longer still. But when seen against the background of the present work, every tiny bit of evidence recovered is well worth the effort.

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